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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Performing in words

By Roy Harris

ERVING GOFFMAN:
Forms of Talk
340pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12
(paperback, £4.95).
0 631 12788 7

Erving Goffman belongs to that distinguished minority of sociologists writing today who are prepared to rely more on the evidence of what they actually see and hear than upon what some combination of principles, prejudices and statistics tells them they ought to be seeing and hearing. So much so in Goffman's case that he must appear to many of his readers to be just the kind of academic visitor nobody really wants as a house guest (unless, of course, the hosts are secretly hoping that a share of their family *faux pas* and linguistic lapses will get into a footnote in his next book). We probably feel we should be less than at ease in the presence of this public private-eye who seems to be for ever on the look-out for candid-camera evidence which might lead to divorce proceedings between our selves and our social images.

This has been Goffman's authorial persona ever since that doctoral dissertation of thirty years ago, which sent him off on fieldwork to a remote hotel in the Shetlands. There he was evidently so intrigued and amazed by the mechanisms of more or less open hypocrisy which enabled the septuagenary Fanny Towers to function that he decided to devote his academic life to one long scrutiny of the whole apparatus of social stage-management that allows us all to get about our daily round, mind-pretending only to mind our own.

Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) was the first and perhaps still the best-known book to emerge from the early fascination with how we all manage to "get away with it" week in week out.

This was the book that earned him the Benjamin Franklin chair of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, which he still holds. It was followed by *Interaction Ritual* (1967), *Relations in Public* (1971), *Frame Analysis* (1974) and *Gender Advertisements* (1976). His latest, *Forms of Talk*, comprises five papers. Three of these have previously

been published in academic journals between 1976 and 1979. But the other two appear here in print for the first time.

For those who have never read any Goffman before, *Forms of Talk* is certainly not the best book to start with. It is too technical, too heavily indebted to the work of others, and at its worst lapses into a language which can only be described as sociological gobbledegook ("expropriation of the dialogic order", "multiple self-implicatory projections", etc). Nonetheless, Goffman is too original for anything he writes to be entirely unrepresentative of him, and too acute an observer of the human scene to be dull for long.

Like all Goffman's previous work, *Forms of Talk* is a contribution to the contemporary analysis of man as a communicator. It belongs to that dominant twentieth-century trend which seeks to explain the individual as being simultaneously creator and creation of his own communicational possibilities. The trend in question is one which treats "the whole mesh of human social life... as a system of human communication" (Margaret Mead), or even sees "culture in its entirety as a form of communication" (B. T. Hall). From this perspective, the study of language, of art and of social behaviour in general is primarily the study of different communicational structures. Languages, following Saussure, are seen as systems of verbal signs. Art is treated as being, in Mukarovsky's phrase, "a semiological fact". Everyday social interaction is explained dramatically in terms of certain communicational "roles" which individuals learn to play - for the benefit of audiences which include themselves. Thus Sartrean existentialism on the one hand and structuralism on the other are equally important tributaries which flow into the mainstream of "communicational" interpretations of modern man.

What all these analyses agree upon, however else they may diverge, is the centrality of man's verbal equipment for coping with the world. Talk, we are to believe, is the modern theatre, is just about the most important activity we ever engage in - next to breathing, sleeping and eating, that is. It's talking that gets us through the day; talking to

our family, the people at work, the people we meet in the street or the pub. It's talking that gets the shopping done and the car service. It's talking that gets us educated, or uneducated. It's talking that gets us jobs, or places on the unemployed register. It's talking that gets us married. And it's almost certainly talking that gets us divorced. In short, without talk our whole lives - both private and public - would just fall apart. Goffman does not proclaim this belief overtly; but every page of *Forms of Talk* implies a tacit insistence upon it.

In spite of the importance of talk, however, the sciences of man have hitherto been able to tell us very

uniform method of analysis could be successfully applied to languages of all shapes and sizes, primitive or civilized, ancient or modern. It could resolve any language spoken by man into a set of constituent units and a set of fixed rules for combining those units into speakable utterances. What more needed explaining?

Very little, it seemed. Large numbers of potential linguistic theorists must at that time have taken up gardening or railway modelling instead, as pursuits likely to hold out greater intellectual challenge. Admittedly, there remained among the residual minor problems of language a question which one of the leading linguists of the day formulated as that of "continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time". This was known as the problem of "discourse analysis". But, alas, not much headway was ever made with this residual problem of descriptive transformational grammar, which reopened the whole question of whether linguists had yet satisfactorily analysed what happened even within the traditional confines of a single sentence, let alone beyond. So it was back to the linguistic drawing-board. The analysis of talk would have to wait while the sentence was dealt with first.

The wait was in vain. For by the mid-1960s, transformationalists had decided to throw out the problem of what happened beyond the boundaries of the sentence. It could be thrown out, in their view, on one or other of two grounds - it hardly mattered which. One ground was that mere talk was of no concern for theorists of linguistic competence; it obviously belonged to the quite different realm of linguistic performance. The alternative ground was that in any case most of the problems of discourse would turn out to have been dealt with en route by the transformationalists' analysis of the sentence. For any discourse can be treated - given sufficient ingenuity - as equivalent to a rather long and complex single sentence. (Substitute "and" for full stops. Supply parenthetical "I said", "he said", etc. In short, treat conversation as in a "Response Circle", which include all those exclamations (often with dubious verbal credentials, such as *oops!*, *coo!* etc) which apparently get "blurred out" as involuntary re-

wind - could write a novel in the form of one long, long sentence. Proust very nearly did, for heaven's sake!)

Yet it would be a great mistake to lay all the blame for neglecting the analysis of talk at the professional door of linguistics. There is a deeper, more general psychological reason. Talk is like plumbing; we ordinarily take it for granted until it goes wrong. But unlike plumbing, when it does go wrong it is something we usually have to put right ourselves. There is no plumber of talk to send for in an emergency. We have to change the verbal washers or unblock the verbal drains as best we can. In all this we have no other expertise to call on than the expertise provided by experience. That is why what people expect of talk is perhaps even more important than what they actually get.

Humpty Dumpty nonplussed Alice because what he said to her on their first encounter "wasn't at all like conversation". Now what exactly a conversation between a small girl and an enormous egg can reasonably be expected to be like, Lewis Carroll did not try to tell us. But almost certainly sociolinguistics will, and within the next ten years (provided the money from the SSRC and other sources does not run out in the meantime). For what Goffman and some of his fellow investigators have undoubtedly achieved within the past decade is to have elevated the study of the seeming trivialities of everyday talk to a status of considerable academic prestige. Conversation seems likely to be the vogue research topic of the 1980s. Putting casual chat under the social scientists' microscope has suddenly become as important as peering into the machinery of the human body or the atom.

Goffman's microscope in *Forms of Talk* focuses first of all on "Replies and Responses". This essay examines the general structure of what the author describes as the "game-like back-and-forth processes" which "might better be called interplay than dialogue". Then he turns to a "Response Circle", which include all those exclamations (often with dubious verbal credentials, such as *oops!*, *coo!* etc) which apparently get "blurred out" as involuntary re-

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Antique auguries

By Garth Fowden

MICHAEL LOEWE and CARMEN BLACKER (Editors): *Divination and Oracles*. 244pp. George Allen and Unwin. £15. 0 04 291016 1

The emperor Julian, fretting in Antioch on the eve of his ill-fated Persian campaign, is said to have offered so many sacrifices in his search for favourable omens that he almost incurred a cattle shortage. This put a contemporary historian in mind of a facetious distich that had been prompted by the similarly maculate religiosity of Marcus Aurelius:

Dear Caesar, if you win another battle,
We are extinct. Yours truly, The
White Cattle.

Until recently, British scholars found little difficulty agreeing with the same historian's judgment that such behaviour was "superstitious, not truly religious". Aping the superficial rationalism of Gibbon, who derided late paganism as "fortification of prodigies", Gilbert Murray spoke of a "failure of nerve", while E. R. Dodds developed medical and psychological verbiage about "endemic diseases" and "endogenous neuroses" that implicitly denied late antique man even the small consolation of responsibility for his own actions. Yet, if the book under review proves anything, it is that there has never yet been a society where men did not seek supernatural guidance over life's crises. Of late, French scholars in particular have shown themselves willing to come to terms with this universal phenomenon — one thinks of the volumes on *La divination*, edited by A. Caquot (1968), and on *Divination et rationalité*, edited by J.-P. Vernant (1974). It is perhaps unnecessary to speculate whether *Divination and Oracles* is designed to compete with these — its interest lies more in its own failure of nerve, and in what that reveals about our ability to understand cultures more con-

scious of their place in the divine scheme of things than our own.

Of nine chapters, eight were originally delivered as a series of lectures in the University of Cambridge in 1979. The titles, in this order, are: "Tibet" (Lama Chime Radha, Rinpoche), "China" (M. Loewe), "Japan" (Carmen Blacker), "The Classical World" (J.S. Morrison), "The Germanic World" (H. Ellis Davidson), "The Babylonians and Hittites" (O. R. Gurney), "Ancient Egypt" (J. D. Ray), "Ancient Israel" (J. R. Porter), and "Islam" (R. B. Serjeant).

The introduction informs us that "the book was not conceived as an exercise in comparison or contrast", and yet the Babylonians, Hittites, Egyptians and Israelites all belonged to the culturally interlinked world of the ancient Near East, which in its latter phase came into contact with the younger civilization that was emerging round the Aegean. No hint of these contacts is conveyed by this book, least of all in the chapter on "The Classical World".

This is a sin merely of omission. Much more serious is the failure to discuss at all the synthesis of Greek and Oriental beliefs about man's possibilities of communication with the divine world that emerged in the Hellenistic and Roman period. The relevant parts of this volume (with the exception of J. D. Ray's sensitive contribution) are typical products of our rigidly demarcated scholarly tradition, in which the Orientalist knocks off at the last snort of Alexander the Great's horse on the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont, and hands over his work-bench (but not his tools or his competence) to the incoming shift of Classicists; while the Classicists themselves propagate a view of their subject which permits a survey of divination and oracles in ancient Greece to omit virtually all reference to inscriptions evidence (such as that from the Asklepieion at Epidaurus, to mention only the most fundamentally significant), and to discuss the Roman aspect of the subject in terms of Livy and Cicero, on the grounds that "under the Empire divination was still practised by the

college of augurs, but the spread of sophistication, and the growing influence of Christianity, hastened the decline in belief in its truth which Cicero already attests."

It was, of course, precisely in the Hellenistic and Roman world — in the Greek magical papyri, the oracles and the writings of the later Neoplatonists — that the conceptual common denominator of the ancient religious traditions was isolated, developed and passed on to Christianity (apparently too "sophisticated" to be discussed here, though J. C. Lawson's *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* has been available since 1910) and Islam (to which Professor Serjeant devotes a rewarding and highly personal chapter). The omission of any discussion of this book "hinge-period" deprives this book even of the formal coherence to which the five chapters that deal with what Braudel called "la Plus Grande Méditerranée" might have aspired.

That the four remaining chapters range even further afield, to Germany and the Far East, merely accentuates the vacuum at the heart of *Divination and Oracles*. This is not just a question of the unsympathetic spirit of rationalism which pervades the book — and is fully avoided only by the one author (Lama Chime Radha, Rinpoche) who writes from within the tradition he is describing. Equally damaging is the lack of an editorial statement about the meaning of the terms "divination" and "oracle" — a strategic necessity in a book such as this, where each contributor is left to offer his own definition, or none at all. At the risk of straying beyond the reviewer's brief, it is perhaps worth mentioning two lines of approach which are likely to prove particularly helpful in locating the place of divinatory and oracular practices within the broader evolution of religious mentalities.

Firstly, a survey such as that under review raises obvious questions about the significance of divinatory beliefs and techniques, such as augury from the flight of birds, that are shared by cultures widely separated in space and time, and between

which there is little probability of historical contact. Here, evidently, is a major problem for specialists in the socio-psychology of religion. Evans-Pritchard's work among the Azande immediately springs to mind, especially since it has already influenced historians of late antique religion such as Peter Brown. *Divination and Oracles* contains only one glancing reference to this work (by Ray), and deliberately makes no attempt to grapple with the wider problem.

Secondly, it is important to avoid the danger, implicit in the first line of approach, of assuming that techniques designed to bring about personal communication between a god and his adept are "superstitious", and therefore belong exclusively to "popular" religion. In societies as different as China, Israel, ancient Greece and Iceland there was a close and natural association between divination and wisdom, what we would call philosophy, and in late antiquity the Neoplatonist lamblichos could treat divination as the first step on the philosopher's way of ascent to

wards divination. Even in the magical papyri from Egypt it is possible to find signs of this up-grading of techniques originally intended to serve baser ends, such as the invocation of a god's help in eliminating one's wife's lover, or affording a sumptuous banquet to impress one's friends.

This ready adaptability of divinatory and oracular techniques renders them almost incomprehensible when detached from their broader intellectual context. In a polytheistic thought-world, where it was believed that men could persuade and even blackmail the gods, there was cold logic in Julian's onslaught on the Antiochene cattle; while in 1939 the apparent unwillingness of the communist Chinese to attack Tibet during astrologically unfavourable months testified to the residual instinct of divination in an atheist society. By and large, *Divination and Oracles* does not show this sort of sensitivity to context, for all the erudition and perceptiveness of some of its contributors.

Following the rules

By Paul Heelas

RENATO ROSALDO: *Hogot Headhunting 1883-1974: A Study in Society and History*. 313pp. Stanford University Press. £18.50. 0 8047 1046 5

As a sequel to Michelle Rosaldo's *Knowledge and Passion* (TLS, November 21, 1980) Renato Rosaldo now provides a detailed historical account of headhunting and feuding, alliances, individual life-paths, and social organization among the Ilongot people of the Philippines. His claim that "attention to historical process cannot simply be aggregated to, but rather requires a fundamental reconception of social structure, and that the reconceiving in turn demands a sharp departure from earlier ways of writing ethnographies" should interest anthropologists in general in his study.

At one level of analysis Rosaldo is successful in showing the importance of history. Here in northern Luzon a "number of social processes... are ordered less through the simple realization of structural principles than through struggles among people with different stakes in the outcome of events". Because the constraining impact of rules is weak, diachronic investigation is required in order to grasp what prompts participants to devise various strategies, or what encourages them to interpret rules in various ways — in terms of their recollections of what has happened in the past and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Marriage, reed, feuding and alliances all owe much to individual initiative. Thus Ilongots "often insist... that in marital choice they follow the desires of their hearts rather than prescriptive rules or the dictates of their elders".

In this book, written twenty years earlier, Varigny shows remarkable foresight. Because prevailing trends could, in his opinion, only lead in the end to an American take-over, he supported and championed the cause of independence, and especially the domestic and foreign policies of the King. Here was a patriotic Frenchman, settled in Hawaii, who long after French rule had been established in Tahiti, served as a loyal minister of the Hawaiian crown; not only enjoying the confidence of Kamehameha V, but the tacit support of Napoleon III. Like the Reverend Shirley Baker, the architect of Tongan independence, Varigny did not allow himself to be manoeuvred into working for the colonial aggrandizement of the French Second Empire.

His thought (in the face of the lack of any direct interest in Hawaii on the part of Britain). French colonial rule might have been the only certain way of frustrating long-term American designs on Hawaii. In terms of Hawaiian cultural values, universal suffrage (demanded by a majority of the white settlers) represented a threat to the power of the King and the nobles. The fact remained, however, that Christianity had come in the shape of puritanical and single-minded missionaries from New England, whose powerful influ-

is, explaining how agents operating within society can break free from and change the rules of the "game". Sometimes he writes of "the interplay of received structures and human activity" (my emphasis); on the whole, though, his view is that "social regularities should be conceived of as cultural typifications that is, a loosely organized body of constructs that serve less to regulate conduct than to provide the terms within which action becomes intelligible."

It would seem, however, that structures and cultural idioms function as standard, timeless, "models for social activity to a greater extent than is implied in Rosaldo's 'models of' view. For example, we are told that headhunting, a crucial life cycle, is not to be regarded "as the automatic application of structural rules, but, in a statistical manner, as one or more central tendencies in a scatter of possibilities". Exactly when youths manage to "lose a head" is a statistical matter — success depends upon opportunity. But it is significant that in her book Michelle Rosaldo treated headhunting as firmly regulated by a system of rules, not just correctly described by a model listing a set of rules. Images and rules motivate individuals and so make decisions regular and predictable, and they must be followed for Ilongots to be what they should be. These images operate in time (youths have to wait their chance) but in traditional society were also timeless (when youths had their chance they "tossed heads" rather than engaging in other improvised forms of initiation).

Although Rosaldo traces the history of social activity with skill, he does not convincingly show that the rule, structures and cultural idioms — which must be present for strategies and improvisations to be meaningful — are themselves generally affected by history. The dominant impression, in fact, is that Ilongot society has been remarkably well suited to assimilating historical changes, such as the Japanese invasion of the islands, to its own rhyme and reason. Only recently have external agencies suppressed headhunting. The fact that Ilongots have failed to assimilate these new pressures hardly seems to require a fundamental reconception of the role of historical explanation in traditional societies.

Old Icelandic: An Introductory Course (378pp. Oxford University Press. £15. Paperback £7.95. 0 19 811173 8) by Sigrid Valfelds and James B. Cathey is published in association with the American-Scandinavian Foundation. It is designed to serve the needs of both linguists and literary scholars, and consists of thirty-five lessons, each dealing with one or more selected grammatical topics.

Symbolic locks

By Edmund Leach

GANANATH OBEYSEKERE: *Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience*. 217pp. University of Chicago Press. £15.75. 0 26 61600 2

"Serpent-worship unfortunately fell years ago into the hands of speculative writers, who mixed it up with occult philosophies, Druidical mysteries and that portentous nonsense called the 'Arkite Symbolism', till now sober students hear the very name of Ophidiolatry with a shiver. Yet it is in itself a rational and instructive subject of inquiry especially notable for its width of range in mythology and religion." Thus Edward Tylor writing in 1871. Although on first reading Gananath Obeyesekere's book appears to be a manifestation of the persisting love/hate relationship between the intellectual heirs of Freud and Malinowski which has surfaced intermittently ever since the early 1920s, it is really part of a very much older tradition.

If we leave aside the relatively recent exercises which have developed out of Levi-Strauss's structuralist interpretations, everything that the anthropologists have ever had to say about "fetichism" and "magic" and the meaning of religious symbolism has its roots in an interest in the "phallic" components of Hindu iconography which goes back at least to de Brosses writing in 1760. It is because Obeyesekere manages to say something fresh about this very basic area of anthropological theory rather than for his half-hearted endorsement of psychoanalytic approach to ethnography, or for any specially novel information about contemporary

South Asian religion, that I heartily recommend this book to all my anthropological colleagues.

For reasons which will be apparent to the reader I have a prejudiced interest so I will approach the central theme tangentially. The author is now Professor of Anthropology at Princeton. He formerly held a similar position at the University of California, San Diego, and before that was Head of the Department of Sociology in the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya. Unlike most of his compatriots in this field he has conducted most of his field research among Sinhalese speakers in his Sri Lankan homeland.

All modern social anthropologists set themselves the goal of working through the local vernacular without the aid of interpreter, but it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that a visiting anthropologist from a foreign land can be sensitive to all the nuances which are recognized by those for whom the local language is mother tongue. This is a complex matter. The anthropologist who chooses to study institutions which have been familiar since childhood has linguistic advantages but is also faced with many special difficulties. I will not go into that. The relevant point is that Professor Obeyesekere justifies the psychoanalytic interpretations which he places upon the cultural evidence he records by emphasizing that he and his informants were in every case both native speakers of the same language who shared a great deal of common cultural background.

What is the argument all about? This is where I come in. Back in 1951 the psychoanalyst Charles Berg published a short monograph entitled *The Unconscious Significance of Hair*. Obeyesekere calls it a "fally book". I myself thought it very interesting. Berg was a friend of mine and this led to a discussion between

us about the relevance of ethnographic evidence for psychoanalysis and vice versa. Berg, following Freud himself, assumed that ethnographic data can be used to support psychoanalytic hypotheses; I was sceptical and argued that the relationship between the "private" symbols employed by an analyst's patients and the "public" symbols which appear in religious ritual and comparable ethnographic contexts is problematic, though I readily conceded that some such relationship must exist.

Berg and I had planned to publish our agreement/disagreement in the form of a joint paper. In the event Berg died in 1957, so only my half of the combined essay (in somewhat amended form) ever got into print.

My essay "Magical Hair" was published in 1958. Obeyesekere takes this essay as his starting-point. He rejects my thesis that a clear distinction can and should be drawn between private individual (psychological) and public (sociological) symbolism. I cannot object to that. I must however protest that in a number of places Obeyesekere completely misrepresents the force of my argument. For example on page 36 he asserts that I maintained that "the meaning of matted hair is chastity", whereas what I actually maintained was that the (public) meaning of hair as religious symbol is "potency", which is ambiguously sexual and divine. Anyone who may be interested in my own views of the matter under discussion should go back to my original essay.

Leaving that aside, Obeyesekere's purpose is to explore in considerable depth the whole feedback process by which individuals derive their private system of symbolism from their cultural environment and then (in some innovative cases) project it back again upon the encompassing cultural system.

Most of the empirical evidence which is discussed derives from the life histories (as provided by extended personal interviews) of eight "ecstatic priests" and one Buddhist ascetic. Seven out of the nine are women. The histories read as if they were the records of free association concocted on a psychoanalyst's couch; they include details of family background, sex experience, dreams and visions. These last employ metaphors which are heavily dependent upon the Buddhist/Hindu folk theology of contemporary Sinhalese.

The subjects of these investigations have it in common that they have all been associated in one way or another with the famous pilgrimage centre of Kataragama in southern Sri Lanka. They also have it in common that they all adopt a hairstyle of matted locks commonly perceived as snakes which are in some fashion a gift or manifestation of the divinity with whom the devotee ecstatic is associated.

Obeyesekere has been publishing materials relating to the various cults focussed on Kataragama for a number of years, but in this book the institutional aspects of Kataragama are in the background. The case histories are presented as a contribution to general theory. As background to this theory, he adopts the view favoured by a number of American anthropologists (eg. Clifford Geertz and Schneider) who hold that "culture" should be viewed primarily as "a system of symbols" that can be interpreted without reference to the infrastructure of material and economic facts of which the symbolic ideology is a part. This is not a position which I favour myself nor is it one that is at all generally adopted by British anthropologists, but most of the argument of this book would probably be compatible with other anthropological attitudes.

The overall point of the presentation is to show that recent develop-

ments in Sinhalese religion (which have been reported by Obeyesekere in other publications) owe their emergence to the innovative acts of individuals rather than to the unanalysed processes of historical accident or cultural diffusion, which are commonly held to account for cultural change.

Obeyesekere goes very much further than I would myself in accepting the validity of psychoanalytic assumptions concerning relationships between adult personality and infant experience and about the general nature of the symbolic sublimation of sexual experience and frustration; but the argument is presented with conviction and clarity.

It is an obvious commonplace to say that, in the history of any society, cultural symbols are constantly being put to new uses. Sometimes familiar symbols are given new meanings; sometimes new symbols are introduced from elsewhere; sometimes there is a complete innovation which is neither transformation nor copy. This we all know. But as to just how it comes about that such innovations are first introduced and then generally accepted we know very little. Obeyesekere uses his case histories to exemplify the role of individual innovative symbolic behaviour in generating such change.

He uses the theme of hair symbolism as his central focus because the literature on this topic is large and because shaven heads and matted locks are prominent distinctive features in the symbolic discourse of the religious specialists who provide his evidence. But, as I have indicated, the underlying argument of the book goes much deeper than that. Specialists in the anthropology of Sri Lanka will read the book as a matter of course but it also deserves the attention of a wide variety of psychologists and anthropologists who have no special knowledge of the ethnography of South Asia.

Hawaiian interlude

By G. B. Milner

CHARLES DE VARIGNY: *Fourteen Years in the Sandwich Islands 1855-1868*. Translated by Alfons L. Korn. 277pp. Hawaii University Press. \$24.95. 0 8248 0709 X

The main interest of this work, originally published by Hachette in 1874, lies in the light it throws on Hawaii in the 1850s and '60s, and especially on the first five years of King Kamehameha V's reign (1863-1868).

Born in Paris in 1829, Charles-Victor Crosnier was educated at the Lycée Bourbon (later the Lycée Condorcet), where he became a schoolfellow and close friend of Hippolyte Taine. He seems to have been an impetuous youth who made strenuous efforts to improve his fortunes, first by adding to his father's name (de Varigny) to his California title in 1851 in the days of the Gold Rush. There he spent three years as a journalist and minor consular official, marrying the daughter of another French immigrant. The young couple (intending to return to France by way of the Far East) arrived in Honolulu in 1855, where they stayed several months while they awaited the birth of their second child. They were attracted by the Hawaiian scene and decided to begin with in the French consulate.

De Varigny was a man of parts, a keen observer of scenery, geography and men, as well as of politics, commerce and industry. Before long he qualified himself for the duties of King Kamehameha V's reign, 1863-1868, gave

him the portfolio of finance minister. Varigny rapidly restored the monetary stability of the kingdom, and in 1865 was made minister of foreign affairs and leader of the cabinet.

Returning to France in 1868 after a strenuous period in office, and ostensibly to negotiate (or renew) a number of commercial treaties with Europe, Varigny began a period of long-overdue and apparently well-deserved leave. Before the family could return to Hawaii, however, the Franco-Prussian war had begun. Its traumatic course and aftermath prolonged the absence of the King's minister. Finally the King's death in 1872, and the need to give the Varigny children a French education, seem to have persuaded the parents not to return to Honolulu. Varigny returned to journalism, wrote one or two travel books, and died in 1899.

But for its relative proximity to the "North American mainland and its strategic importance... Hawaii, which soon after Cook's and Vancouver's voyages had been united by a powerful and determined (as well as far-seeing) Polynesian chieftain, later King Kamehameha I, the founder of the dynasty, might, like Tonga, have retained both its monarchy and a measure of independence. The royal family, in fact, sought the protection of benevolent British monarch, and especially of his navy and his Anglican missionaries, rather than a more immediate and sterner American and republican missionary presence.

In terms of Hawaiian cultural values, universal suffrage (demanded by a majority of the white settlers) represented a threat to the power of the King and the nobles. The fact remained, however, that Christianity had come in the shape of puritanical and single-minded missionaries from New England, whose powerful influ-

ence militated in favour of a democratic and republican form of government. While no one took exception to democracy as such, in the context of a rapid rise in immigration (especially from the Far East) and of the unequal struggle of the Hawaiians to maintain their distinctive cultural values without a proper political or economic infrastructure, universal suffrage was bound to bring the old order to an end; by the 1890s the Hawaiian monarchy had been overthrown.

In this book, written twenty years earlier, Varigny shows remarkable foresight. Because prevailing trends could, in his opinion, only lead in the end to an American take-over, he supported and championed the cause of independence, and especially the domestic and foreign policies of the King. Here was a patriotic Frenchman, settled in Hawaii, who long after French rule had been established in Tahiti, served as a loyal minister of the Hawaiian crown; not only enjoying the confidence of Kamehameha V, but the tacit support of Napoleon III. Like the Reverend Shirley Baker, the architect of Tongan independence, Varigny did not allow himself to be manoeuvred into working for the colonial aggrandizement of the French Second Empire. His thought (in the face of the lack of any direct interest in Hawaii on the part of Britain). French colonial rule might have been the only certain way of frustrating long-term American designs on Hawaii.

Alfons L. Korn, to whom we are already indebted for other major contributions to Hawaiian history, has produced an excellent translation. His slips are only minor ones. One recognizes the ghost of a French sentence behind almost every English one; but perhaps that is no bad thing.

NEW TITLES

THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
EDITED BY BRIAN MORRIS

The only authoritative text of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the First Folio (1623), and upon this the present edition is based, taking into account the emendations proposed by later editors from Howe to the present day. The vexed question of the relationship between *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) is discussed at length, and this gives rise to consideration of the dates at which each was written, leading to an earlier dating for *The Shrew* than has hitherto been proposed. Shakespeare's authorship of the play is established, and new suggestions are made about its probable sources in folklore and Italian comedy. The commentary seeks to elucidate the various problems, lexical, interpretative, theatrical and literary, which the play presents, and the critical introduction, beginning with an account of the text's history at the hands of the eighteenth-century 'adaptors', offers an account of the play's structure, themes and style which releases it from the category of farce and establishes it as a brilliantly wrought comedy on the age-old theme of the battle between the sexes.

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This edition of *Much ADO About Nothing* offers a text with the authoritative Quarto of 1600 as its primary basis. The notes to the text, while adopting much of the annotation of the 1924 Arden edition which related the play illuminatingly to Elizabethan life and ideas, take into account illustrative material which has since become available. The full introduction is wholly new; it offers a comparison between the play and its sources, discussions of the tradition of jests in love and of witty rivalry between the sexes, and of the evolution of Shakespeare's dramatic style in comedy; and gives accounts of the play's dramatic structure, its social context and its stage history. Appendices deal with source analogues, the 'evolution' of style in wit, DeWenant's seventeenth-century adaptation as *The Love of a Lawyer*, and the songs and traditional stories relevant to the play.

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EDITED BY ANTONY HAMMOND

The introduction to this edition of *King Richard III* provides a full discussion of the unusually difficult problem of establishing a text, taking into account considerations of first publication and performance. The relation of the play to its sources, chiefly Hall's *Chronicle* and *The Mirror for Magistrates*, is discussed, and extracts from these are given at the end of the volume. A full critical introduction explores the figure of Richard as a embodiment of the Vice of medieval drama, and the Machiavellian villain of Marlow's plays; Professor Hammond shows how Shakespeare goes beyond these models to create an immensely powerful figure, compelling despite his malignity, who has fascinated audiences throughout the play's history.

This edition provides full commentary and apparatus at the foot of each page of text; while the appendices offer further discussion of difficult passages and reproduce lines which are unique either to the Folio or to the Quarto.

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Making things well

By Frances Spalding

MALCOLM YORKE:

Eric Gill
Man of Flesh and Spirit
304pp. Constable. £12.50.
0 09 463740 7

The revival of craft in the high-tech age proves that William Morris's battle with the machine was not as finally lost as it once seemed. Eric Gill argued that handicraft methods would not die out because they met an inherent, indestructible need in human nature. In the last decade a craftsman emerging from the Royal College was more likely to disappear into the Cotswolds than into industry. But if the craft revival is here to stay, so too are the often invidious effects of the machine. Goods of high quality may be more widely available but Morris's wish is still an ideal: "We are waiting for what must be the work, not the leisure and taste of a few scholars, authors and artists, but of the necessities and aspirations of the workmen throughout the civilized world." Gill hoped and laboured for the same. Michael Yorke, in his excellent reassessment of the artist, constantly reminds us that the issues which exercised Gill are still unresolved today.

It is tempting to regard Gill as an anachronism, a throwback to the twelfth century in the unholy era of the first machine age. He looked like a medieval craftsman crossed with a monk for he never wore trousers but drossed in a loose-fitting, belted smock. Beneath this protruded his knee-length silk underpants, which matched in colour his scarlet socks. As he intended, his garb marked him out from the drab uniform representative of an anonymous society. He despised the "Daily-Mail mind" and much else in twentieth-century Britain, and though he executed sculpture for BBC's Broadcasting House, he forbade the wireless in his own home. Like Pugin, he looked back admiringly to the Catholic Middle Ages through the Gothic Revival, a pre-Raphaelite or Parnassian haze, forgetting medieval corruption and censorship and finding in life "Christian, normal and human". He observed that art was then the making well of whatever needed making. By contrast the artist in the twentieth century, with its rabid commercialism and self-expression, had become either a mere lap-dog to the rich or an indulgent, reclusive, cultivating private eccentricities.

In Gill's one-eyed view, two things had begun this decline: capitalism and the Renaissance; that glorious attack of high fever. For him, Christianity was not a beginning, and the logical outcome of increasing verisimilitude was the devaluation of art into the picture postcard or photograph. He regretted the separation of the artist from the artisan and thought it degrading for the artist to be released from all necessity of producing something useful. Yet what the artist does retain, which the man at the conveyor belt does not, is total responsibility for the making. The artist is therefore envied, the individuality of his work over-valued. It becomes rare or extreme, while the audience dwindles to an educated or cultured elite. Yorke, pursuing Gill's line of thought, argues:

Museums are now the only places an artist and a workman might meet, and there are no shortages of museums; as the capitalists and governments of our industrial nations are willing to finance any amount of this kind of cultural charity to avert their consciences for robbing the worker of any outlet for his sense of beauty in the course of his daily work. If you are to regard a nation's culture as something made and consumed in leisure time, then, writes Gill, "to hell with culture as a thing added like a sauce to otherwise unpalatable state fish".

Gill called himself a stout utter, supporting his usefulness in his art and which he first made his capital. He alone in his profession, he wrote, "has made his directions by assistants, and he found all over England, he

never lacked work, though he shunned the London art world, moving to Ditchling in Sussex in 1907 after the birth of his second daughter. There he and his wife rediscovered certain domestic traditions and adopted the rule "never buy what you can make". He was eventually joined by the calligrapher Edward Johnston, the sculptor Desmond Chute and the printer Hilary Pepler and the "Ditchling community" began. In 1918 Gill, Pepler and Chute were invested as novices in the Third Order of St Dominic, and from then on work and worship intermingled. Gill's religion (he had been converted to Catholicism in 1913) further deepened his artistic beliefs. "Work is sacred, leisure is secular," he declared, believing like Morris that a thing made should be a joy to both the maker and the user. He hoped others would abandon "individualistic domesticity" for the dignified poverty of a community like his. As Dr Yorke astutely remarks: "That the majority of workmen actually wanted a life more like that of their capitalist masters did not occur to Gill (who knew no factory workers at all) until towards the end of his life."

An enthusiast, he was easily led but congratulated himself on the choice of his leaders. One of these was Edward Johnston, whose calligraphy classes at the Central School had first awakened Gill's interest in lettering. Johnston devoted a series of lectures to the inscription on Trajan's Column, and after twelve talks had revealed the letter "C". In 1906, Gill travelled to Rome to study the inscription at first hand but never slavishly copied its example, adding to his Roman letters the series which are a distinguishing mark of a chisel-formed letter. But with Edward Johnston he also helped popularize the "sans serif" or block-letter form, today ubiquitously used on railway stations or wherever there is a need for maximum clarity: Gill later transferred this style into typography, which, since his invention, had imitated in weakness the variation in thickness produced by the pen. Certain of Gill's sans serif printing types adopt a line of unvarying thickness. These are best suited for captions, as in lengthy texts the absence of serifs, which help the eye across the page, creates "vertical slips".

His eleven type designs prove that he was not opposed to the machine in itself, which could, he said, produce "the beauty of bones", but to the way it enslaved and demeaned workers. He was attracted to wood engraving because the artist was responsible for the entire production; there was no division of labour between designer and engraver. He could do anything he wanted in this medium, controlling the lights and darks with dazzling skill, the discipline of the technical sharpening his designs. Nor are they emotionally cold, as certain of Gill's critics declared, for the quaint poses reminiscent of medieval art, are both elegant and affecting. Moreover in his work for Pepler's St Dominic's Press and for the Golden Cockerel Press he blended image and text with great invention.

These engravings also represent an outpouring of his religious and sexual beliefs. Introduced by Anglo-Coomaraswamy to Hindu art and to its frank portrayal of sexual acts, Gill afterwards aimed at a synthesis of "Ajanta and Chaucer". He used an image of naked copulation to symbolize Christ's love for his Church, and his literal illustration of The Song of Songs aroused a Catholic controversy. In his own character, Gill was a man of letters, a lover of order and precision. The man who declared that a workman's life should be kept as neat as an altar suddenly abandoned to Chaucer with his mistress and periodically resorted to prostitutes. "Man is matter and spirit," he wrote, "both real and both good". But the spirit was not always infused into the matter. Gill drew a pair of lovers for Roger Fry who regretted that "till we're much more civilized in the real sense" it could not be publicly exhibited. He

thought the sculpture "noble" but criticized Gill's gliding of the necklace, finding in that detail a hint of pornography.

Gill's strong sexuality was one of the two forces that formed the content of his art. Michael Yorke deals frankly with the artist's erotica. Fascinated by public hair and genitals, Gill left a whole folder of drawings in which the male organ is shown from front, side view and in elevation, its measurements recorded and the owner's initials pencilled in. He drew female nudes in poses that exposed their pudenda, and when he showed a series of these to some friends, John Rothenstein broke the shocked silence by asking who the sinner had been. "The Deputy Librarian of High Wycombe," Gill replied. Like Stanley Spencer, he wanted to believe that all sexual desire is holy and was prepared to misread, over-select or ignore aspects of Catholic teaching in order to prove it. It was said of him that after conversion he thought of everything in terms of sex, even religion. "The excess of amorous nature fertilizes the spiritual field," he declared. He saw that all freedoms are interconnected and therefore related the oppression caused by industrialism. By portraying sexual matters, he saw himself helping "to destroy the morality which is corrupting us all".

Gill's nude drawings, with their fringe of shadow suggesting shallow relief, are as finely classed as his sculptures and stone inscriptions. Like Blake, he sought the bounding line that banishes chaos. All the parts had to be round, firm, flowing, clear and clean (his epithets). Dr Yorke finds these nudes some of the finest drawings produced this century, but with this few critics in the past have agreed. One irritating mannerism is Gill's emphatic touching of the nude's outline, the black mark lingering on parts like an obsessive caress. Yorke remarks that Gill, despite his medieval view of women, creates entirely subversive to men (creating being equated with male virility), is here "obscene" before the sex he despised. But the drawings suggest otherwise. The woman's head is often left vacant or cut off by the edge of the paper, her body flicked into position by an unfurling line. These drawings are surely as much about possession as the erotic photographs that Gill collected. They bleakly expose his want of human sympathy. In the same way his autobiography exposes his lack of respect for his wife. ("I had £15 in hand; a table, some chairs and a few knives and forks and the top hat I



"Clothes as churches and town halls", a wood engraving by Eric Gill for *Clothes*. An Essay upon the Nature and Significance of the Natural and Artificial Integuments worn by Men and Women, 1931. One of several essays by Gill on the subject of clothes and the need to dress rationally and with dignity. The picture is taken from Malcolm Yorke's *Eric Gill: Man of Flesh and Spirit*, which is reviewed here.

was married in. I also had a wife ...") Yorke does not extend our knowledge of Mary Gill, who remains a silent, unusually patient background figure.

Much else about Gill can irritate. Lady Rothenstein regretted his "hard and unsubtle clarity" and his "absolutely opinionated and aggressive intellect". His prose is turgid and repetitive and his argument often oversimplified. His ideas were drawn from others, chiefly from Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris and Blake. As he himself admitted, his knowledge of history was poor and as Yorke demonstrates, his political thinking was impractical and naive. He wrote fifty-one books and pamphlets, yet as a crass, crude amateur, "maddening like a tiresome, uneducated workman arguing in a pub". Yet respect for what Gill achieved and tried to achieve continues to grow. In 1980, Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery mounted the show "Strict Delight" which looked at all aspects of his work, and several of his rarely seen sculptures were shown more recently at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. This book warms interest in Gill.

perhaps because Michael Yorke's broad and humorous impartiality mellows Gill's fanaticism and egotism. One is also seduced by the book's layout and presentation, which even Gill could surely not have faulted.

Herbert Read was of the opinion that Gill's life and philosophy would outlive his work. He aspired towards integration, of matter with spirit, of the artist with society, moving towards Blake's Gates of Paradise through "Mutual Forgiveness of each vice". He hoped that the history he started at Ditchling, then at Capel-y-fyn, and finally at Piggotts would mushroom; and that the workers would rise up and demand the right to make fewer but better goods. But as Yorke wryly comments, "the slow deliberate making of a thing to last for generations seems irrelevant to people who may have no future". Gill, however, thought he was only a beginning, that it would take several generations to effect "a reasonable, decent, holy tradition of working". He told this to David Jones who Yorke concludes, "thought he did not sound very hopeful".

Glazing the natives

By Dennis Silk

ANTHONY OLIVER:

Staffordshire Pottery
The Tribal Art of England
177pp. Heinemann. £25.
0 434 54392 6

Anthony Oliver's very readable book has all the advantages and few of the disadvantages of being untheoretically based in a field where subjective judgments must abound. He declares his hand at once: "It is a love story, and no love story without prejudice." Situated in Aladdin's cave of a shop in Church Street, Kensington, visiting Staffordshire potters and collectors of deep knowledge of his subject, which is only brought by time, experience and continuous exposure to the figures themselves and the posters, magazines and prints of the period. His previous volume, *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure*, was dedicated to the unknown potters of Staffordshire, many of whom died young of lead poisoning or silicosis. Between them the two books now form an imposing tribute to the last of the English folk art.

Staffordshire Pottery, the Tribal Art of England first examines the roots from which Victorian pottery

figures grew. Oliver explores the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries swiftly and perceptively, paying due tribute to those Staffordshire Salt Glaze potters whose distinctive few groups and dappled glazes were the harbingers of the work of the Wood family of Burslem. "A group of Ralph Wood figures can look depressingly like the out-patients department at a hyperthyroid clinic" - thus his briefly salutary, acknowledging their importance as a staging post but depicting their pseudo-classical gentility and lack of vitality.

There is an excellent section on Walton, the important potter who first, Oliver says, "turned his back on the gentilities of the late eighteenth century. He preferred the world about him to the world of myth and legends. His farmers and their women were working in real fields only a few miles from his factory in Burslem, not floating around in diaphanous draperies among the meadows of Elysium". Walton lives as vividly in these pages does the crisp boogie of his well-illustrated figures. And the ensuing chapter on Obadiah Sherratt, the Master of Burslem, is similarly good. Having dismissed Josiah Wedgwood as a "cold and impersonal" maker of figures, more like a confectioner than a potter, an "ice of wedding cakes

than a moulder of native clay". Oliver proceeds to extol Sherratt - "maker of wonderful figures and groups, where bulls roared and wives screamed at drunken husbands" - as the first potter to comment truthfully on his social scene.

The chapter on animals serves as a commentary on the way in which the Victorian city-dwelling borders derived their fun and excitement - particularly the trade fairs, with their trained animals, menageries and showmen. One of the pleasures of this book is the richness of the social history so intricately bound up with its material. The Staffordshire potters were providing people not only with decorative ornaments, but with ways of remembering their heroes and heroines, their villains and their moralizers. Few conflicts provided more of these commemorative figures than the Crimean War, and Anthony Oliver, with his particular interest in naval figures, is quick to point out the way in which the sailors predominated.

The book will have a wider appeal than to collectors of Staffordshire: it is copiously and beautifully illustrated. Its sentences, often lacking the main verbs which a pedantic schoolmaster might require, nonetheless have a freshness which stems from the confidence of real knowledge.

GEORGE M. MARSDEN:

Fundamentalism and American Culture

The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925

320pp. Oxford University Press. £11.50.
0 19 502 758 2

Few people have gathered together in their mind's eye the vastness, intensity and oddity of American religion. America is repellent and moving, advanced and backward, familiar and incredible, naive and sophisticated, litigious and lawless, innocent and corrupt, scrupulous and brutal, and above all - pious and profligate. Of course, it all depends where you are. In California there is less piety, more profligacy and a greater proliferation of cults. Indeed, piety thins out all along the Pacific coast. The Churches of the western seaboard are barely two-and-a-half times as strong as the Churches in Britain. But in Utah, on the adjacent time band, the religious pens enfold ninety per cent of the available sheep. In roughly the next time band, in Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Mississippi and Louisiana, the Churches claim some three quarters of the population as members. According to the most recent Gallup Poll, about half of the youngest adult age group in America worships on any given Sunday, even though their religious knowledge is often pretty exiguous.

Works like J. Russell Hale's *The Unchurched* (Harper and Row, 1980) and the revised 1976 edition of E. S. Gautsard's *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* enable one to have a panoramic view of an amazing variety and dynamism. The mind's eye has to dilate beyond our own flat and circumscribed single vision to take in a curved superana almost without margin. You have to brood over the surface curvature of America, piecing together an ecology of place-name and architectural presence. You must travel all the way from St John's Episcopal Church or a French Catholic in shady Georgian Savannah to a neat white kirk overlooking the Pacific at Cape Mendocino. You have to get used to thousands of cool-columned Baptist churches housing hot old-time religion - black and white. You have to visualize the Korean Methodist Church in downtown San Francisco, the Armenian cathedral in 31st Street, New York, the Bahai Temple by Lake Michigan, the tiny Pentecostal by the black crosses above white monastic walls in the Spanish southwest. You have to stand recollecting your own genealogy in burial mounds with English names on them by Congregational churches in Maine and Vermont. As early morning mass is being sung in a Trappist monastery in the Rockies, the world's most powerful punching bag is getting ready to save and to operate on television.

You also have to recognize two characteristics which follow from such religious intensities set in such immense spaces. Montana, after all, which is relatively slack in its religiosity, has the same population per square mile as England in the eighth century. On the one hand a vocabulary and phraseology have been developed which convey religious states of mind and atmospheres with vivid precision. On the other hand voices do not carry across the spaces. The messages keep altering as you pass from wave-length to wave-length, cut off by geographical and cultural distance. In spite of the bombast of mass communication, you can still live by one cultural channel in a particular locality. Single channel minds are continually reinforced and exhibit levels of certitude almost unknown in England. We do not begin to imagine what some kinds of American certainty are like until some odd manifestation hits us, or until some key group loses its sense of direction and develops a terrifying wobble of guilt and self-scrutiny. We are vulnerable both to American faith and to loss of faith which is why we cannot afford our ignorance: much longer. (Why we are ignorant is another question. Hollywood offered an odd angle on American society. The

American intelligentsia, which sends us our key messages, counters the religiosity of the population with a proportionate agnosticism. And the BBC has kept us within a bland medium wave that excludes disruptive enthusiasms, especially American-style preaching.)

American certitudes, and the occasional terrifying psychic wobble, are on a strange time-scale out of phase with our own. When you walk in Central Park or by Lakeside Chicago, the different layers measure architectural history by the decade. In much the same way, religion is measured by a sense of history which is contracted and susceptible to momentary excitations, or else just lost in huge holes covered by formulae. It is difficult to have a stable reference back: you have constantly to revive. Most Americans cannot conceive of a clergy on the Coleridgean model, or of a national Church which runs *pari passu* with the history of a people, marking every huddle of human habitation, and weak precisely because that people has not yet imagined its real absence. Americans celebrate the formula which unhinges Church from State and for that reason no longer know what a historic transition they have accomplished. This leaves them with an unacknowledged need, which surfaces strongly but ambiguously. John F. Wilson in *Public Religion in American Culture* (Temple University Press, 1979) traces a shadowy American anima in the shape of the national covenant and the rhetoric used by Presidents on civil occasions. An English national ceremony like the royal wedding, which marks our own staid and less formulaic sense of time, is powerful enough to get tens of millions up at three o'clock by the Pacific and at six o'clock on the eastern seaboard. Why, for that matter, is Yale more Gothic and religious than Oxford? It is because the emplacements, like the formulae, have to be extra large and massive where the sense of continuous meaning is so evanescent?

On this scene, with its immense emplacements, ritual formulae, contracted time sense, metropolitan scepticism and unimaginable certitudes, evangelical Protestantism is the largest single element, the historic candidate. Not only is it now beginning to see whether it can recapture a defining role in the national persona, but it reaches out to much smaller groupings in every Protestant country. In the mid-nineteenth century, many of the impulses spread from Victorian England to America, through, for example, the YMCA and the Keswick Convention, but now the predominant traffic from the American centre. The impact is already quite strong in England and Holland, and identifiable even in countries like New Zealand, Sweden and Finland. It is arguably part of a firming up of the religious profile, which is already in train in the Roman Catholic Church, which is brutally evident in Islam, and which under certain circumstances can sharply interact with a reassertion of national confidence. Indeed, Roland Robertson has argued that the fundamentalism of Iran and of the United States should be viewed together in an international and global context where nations need to find their souls.

That is the size and potential of the phenomenon of fundamentalism, meaning here recovery of "fundamental" elements. It provides the hardest of most distinctive elements in blocs of national consciousness antagonistically defined on the international stage. Progressives have so far too easily dismissed recessives as foredoomed by history, which is just the kind of dogma from which they are supposed to have freed themselves. Progressives have also conflated labels like evangelicalism, fundamentalism and (now) the moral majority, not thinking the paradoxes and varieties of these things worth scrutiny. Scholarship suggests that a more careful, less triumphantly certain look be accorded to the varied forms of conservative faith and morals. Liberal survival may depend on it.

George Marsden's mastery and lucid *Fundamentalism and American Culture* is essential reading for those who want to understand the historical background of all the varieties of conservative faith and morals in America. Dr Marsden teaches at Calvin College, and I notice a fair sprinkling of Dutch names among the colleagues he thanks in his preface. So the tough intellectuality exemplified in this book is part of the tough intellectual strain in the tradition he describes, especially perhaps the conservative forms of high Presbyterianism which had such long and powerful influence at Princeton. That, of course, is the first shock to established liberal stereotypes, especially perhaps the kind of view nourished by Richard Hofstadter's brilliant *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. There are two other stereotypes which are shaken, though I must say not entirely displaced. One is that social reform and/or a communal concern cannot coexist with individualistic piety. The other is that this type of piety conflates God and America, whereas, in fact, America can figure both as Paradise Regained and as Babylon the Great.

Most of what follows will be concerned with the tension between intellect and sentiment, science and know-nothingism within American evangelical Christianity, especially the conservative wing and its fundamentalist offshoots.

If we are to understand the intellectual elements which from time to time have informed fundamentalism, we need to distinguish it from a variety of adjacent and sometimes overlapping traditions. A very complicated Venn diagram would be needed to represent the overlaps of evangelical revivalism, pietism, the various holiness movements, millenarianism, Baptist traditionalism, Reformed confessionalism and other orthodoxies. Of course, you can if you wish reduce the whole phenomenon sociologically to a hardened shell around a dying form of social life. But this is not Marsden's way and he points to the contemporary vitality of fundamentalism as underlining the relevance of long-term doctrinal traditions, which, in the late nineteenth-century millennial teaching (especially "dispensational premillennialism") centred in Bible Institutes and Conventions, and conservative Presbyterian theology based at Princeton. Indeed, biblical inerrancy as formulated by scholars at this latter-day Geneva was parallel to papal inerrancy as formulated in Rome.

The roots of what we see, and perhaps fear, today lie in the period immediately following the Civil War, when evangelical Protestantism was still confident and dominant. The tradition continued through a multiplicity of divisions and mental agonies up to the tensions between aggressive liberal modernists and evangelicals which came to a climax after the First World War. Everyone knows the fundamentalist defeat dramatized in 1925 by the Scopes ("Monkey") Trial at Dayton, Tennessee. But, unlike so many of their liberal opponents, the defeated party understood the corporate roots of belief and they retired to build a powerful sub-culture which has now re-emerged. Unfortunately, the peremptory dismissal of the conservatives at Dayton operates in our minds like the equally notorious dismissal of Bishop Wilberforce by Huxley at the British Association. We now understand fundamentalism simply as the losing side in a contest between intellectuals and scientists and the benighted inhabitants of Hicksville. Not so, says Dr Marsden.

Of course, fundamentalism does include an intense and evolutionary thrust. Certainly this reviewer's sense of that through having to work out a version of Edmund Gosse's classic *Father and Son* two generations later. The family encyclopedia still shows the section on the origin of the universe scored out by a youthful hand for contradicting Genesis. But the point is that evangelical culture often encouraged the buying of encyclopedias and could embody a profound regard for learning. The worst agony grew out of this regard, together with the respect for decency which into the evangelical family which made open repudiation a reading horror. The

sociology of religion is littered with academics scorched in this particular fire.

Marsden, who may well have undergone his own trials, points to a profound respect for science and rationality growing out of a Baconian emphasis on careful observation and the classification of facts. This Baconianism was wedded to a variant of Scottish Common Sense Realism which argued that facts can be plainly apprehended. Hypotheses were regarded as merely speculative. So the clash which today has the appearance of ignorance against sophistication derived a century or more ago from a classic conflict of paradigms in the Kuhnian sense. Moreover, the defeated paradigm, like the sub-culture it represented, has regrouped its resources and initiated a critique of the presuppositions of Descartes. "Creationism" is currently taken seriously, at least in some of its restatements. Of course, the offshoots have often been richly ludicrous, especially when the emphasis on factuality coalesces with Biblical literalism. One of the most painfully funny examples was produced by the evangelical Keeper of the London Zoo. He described in precise and expert detail the problems faced by Noah in the Ark when he had to cope with feeding and heating and the segregated accommodation of all the available species, aided doubtless by a special augmentation of divine wisdom. For many evangelicals, including revivalists like Reuben Torrey, the Bible became an encyclopedic puzzle, in which beauty and expressive power were entirely subordinate to pedantic clarity and flat exercises in ingenious intelligence.

The virtuous scientism of some evangelicals and their reductive empiricism was conjoined with an optimistic approach which occluded the traditional Calvinist stress on the corruption of the intelligence by the Fall. Such lack of saving doubt was very American and led to a celebration of the American Eden, sheltering "true religion and undefiled" against a higher criticism spawned in corrupt and sceptical Europe. All the same, the serpentine intrusion of the new paradigm had to be scotched, or at least accommodated, without fatal damage. Conservative Christian intellectuals therefore distinguished between a process of development under divine governance and one based on blind fate which "knows no end and adopts no means".

The intellectual crisis deepened once their common sense ceased to be common and when what was obvious to them became equated with the bizarre. One way out was to emphasize a division of spheres between historical or scientific truths and the spiritual truths of religious experiences. Protes-

tants like Henry Ward Beecher of Boston could expand this approach to take in romantic ideas revealed in Nature: truths of the heart and sentiment, the work of "imagination" and "sublimity". What made such shifts palatable to many Americans was the commitment shared by all the protagonists to morality. The identification of theological liberalism with a "new morality" was not yet such as to add moral to theological antagonism.

The seeds of the 1920s debate were probably generated during the ascendancy of D. L. Moody, whom Marsden regards as the principal begetter of fundamentalism. The Moody ambience combined the holiness movement, premillennialism and biblical infallibility, to which was joined a pragmatic dislike of internecine combat and denominationalism. Moody's base was the interdenominational Y.M.C.A. He was the key figure in conferences and conventions on the influential Keswick model, devoted to holiness and the Holy Spirit, and doing social "service for Christ". In Moody there was an individual piety, which however much it might issue in strenuous works of charity, contrasted with the organic communitarian and reformist concerns of much Protestantism in the earlier part of the century, as exemplified in (say) Charles Finney and "Oberlin" theology. There was also a strain of separatist idealism, illustrated in the hymns of his collaborator Ira D. Sankey. Nevertheless Moody and Sankey together claimed to have rescued half a million souls from hell in their visits to England, and their Sacred Songs and Solos came to rest on thousands of harmoniums in English chapels and parlours.

In all these varied aspects, Marsden discerns a basic ambivalence, extending to the question of what place was properly assigned to the intellect. He sums it up by saying that sometimes the advocates of fundamentalism

were backward looking and reactionary, at other times they were imaginative innovators. On some occasions they appeared militant and divisive; on others they were warm and irenic. At times they seemed ready to forsake the whole world over to a point of doctrine; at other times they appeared heedless of tradition in their zeal to win converts. Sometimes they were optimistic patriots; sometimes they were prophets shaking from their feet the dust of a doomed civilization.

What remains especially interesting is that in all the persistent cross-fertilizations of Calvinist rigour and pietist or Methodist Arminianism, the latter element coped most easily with the intellectual crisis. Methodist

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"heart-work" could be transmuted into an emphasis on religious experience and thence into "feelings". The sheer intellectuality and sophistication of the Calvinist wing helped bring about the denouement of the 1920s. The sufferings of the Presbyterian intelligentsia, exhibited in such different figures as Benjamin Warfield and J. Gresham Machen, are highly instructive. There were, of course, other strands within Presbyterianism. William Jennings Bryan was torn apart along a rather different axis. His old-time religion held that the gospel was building up the imminent Kingdom of God in America and that America was the pre-eminent example of how Christianity was the inspiration of civilization the world over. So when America started to desert the source of its greatness, his whole position was threatened. Billy Sunday, the evangelist, was even simpler in his approach and mixed his do-it-yourself Gospel with the traditional American virtues of decency, minifinity, patriotism, thrift, sobriety and hard work. Bryan, the post-millennialist and Sunday, the pre-millennialist, were united in the 1920s through their last stand for the identity of America and Christian civilization.

Whereas for Bryan, God's inscrutable election became populist electioneering in God's very own American Zion, in Billy Sunday the grave demagogue of the elders became free-wheeling, hearty camaraderie. Cut-away-collared and wing-collared way to shirt-sleeves and to the entertaining emotionalism purveyed by Bible students nicknamed "Bob", "Bud", "Cyclone", "Gypsy" and "Joe". While Reuben Torrey disdained "the amusement competition", Billy Sunday gloried in it. An intellectual like Gresham Machen was equally repelled

both by Sunday's corybanic Christianity and by Bryan's identification of the Kingdom of God with the progress of America.

The tensions within Presbyterianism derived not only from the tenacious grasp of an older paradigm, but from the development of organizational machinery for dealing with differences, and from the role of explicit statements, like the Westminster Confession. In this Presbyterianism was less flexible than the Baptists. Moreover, the Presbyterian ethos was partly an expression of that Scottish and Scots-Irish inheritance to which the English are so ill attuned, especially as manifested in Ulster. The memorization of the 107 answers of the Shorter Catechism was ordinarily completed by the age of six. This deposit of dogma, inculcated from youth upward, meant that as late as 1910 the Presbyterian General Assembly adopted a five-point declaration of orthodox concerning miracles, the atonement, the Virgin birth, the bodily resurrection and biblical inerrancy, which provided a last rallying-point for the 1920s. And alongside this appeared the Scofield Reference Bible, published by OUP in 1909.

So the scene was set for the showdown in Dayton. The world war was the preliminary testing time, arousing in some believers a doubt about the whole moral course of civilization, and in others—including many liberals—an enthusiastic endorsement of the war as a last rallying-point for the 1920s. And alongside this appeared the Scofield Reference Bible, published by OUP in 1909.

The process of socialization

By Arnold Beichman

DEBORAH DASH MOORE.
At Home in America
Second Generation New York Jews
303pp. New York: Columbia University Press. \$20.70.
0 231 05062 3

Maurice Cranston once described as "the almost miraculous achievement in the United States" the development of "a community of near equals out of an immigrant stock of enormous diversity". This achievement, he said, "was not the work of America's political institutions; it was the work of American social institutions, schools, churches, neighborhood associations and such like".

At Home in America, a sociological history of immigrant Jews and their second-generation offspring, demonstrates how this socialization process took place—without any government bureaucracy, commissions, welfare agencies, legislation, government subsidies or appropriations—in New York City in the period roughly between 1890 and 1914 when several million Jews came to the United States from Eastern Europe and Russian Russia.

Even though many Jewish immigrants settled in other parts of the country, the author concentrates on New York City because the "Americanization" process which occurred in the metropolis came, in the words of Robert S. Warrshaw, "to embody the common experience of American Jews".

The migration of Jews from Europe continued into 1940, this time from the western part, as the refugees fled Nazi-ravaged Europe to seek refuge in the United States. Today the six million American Jews, Max Diamond has reminded us, have "attained the highest economic, educational (non-Jewish) and social levels in Jewish history and enjoy a degree of freedom never before attained by Jews in any country, in any civilization, in any age, including the kingdom of Judah and Israel in ancient days and the state of Israel today".

The New York second-generation Jews are spread all over the city (five boroughs, but I was Manhattan, and particularly its Lower East Side, where the paternal generation settled first). The East Side became the sentimental

symbol of slums and ghetto. And it was from this part of New York City that some Jews escaped to other boroughs comprising the metropolis—Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island. And within these boroughs burgeoned new neighbourhood ghettos, self-segregation amidst geographical dispersion.

The second generation shares the experience of having grown up American in Jewish immigrant homes, where Yiddish was the "mama-lushen", or mother-tongue, and the synagogue was the parental generation society. These youngsters, exposed to the American way in the free (or public) schools, adapted existing American institutions to fashion their own moral community, says Deborah Moore. "In fact, what emerged was a new 'Jewishness'—secular rather than religious, and where it was religious, far different from the 'shetl' religiosity back in Eastern Europe.

Deficiencies of scholarship mar what might otherwise have been an important piece of cultural history. For one thing, the writing and thinking are full of pseudo-Marxology, something which mars so much otherwise serious work in Anglo-American social science. Moore is determined to plant her story into some Marxist theory of "class" and "class consciousness". She talks about the second generation as having "synthesized its ethnic values and class interests", which says nothing more than that they formed trade unions. Or we are given socio-babble sentences like, "The neighbourhood... offered individual Jews an environment which mitigated the stresses of assimilation"; which, translated, means that Jewish immigrants weren't bothered by their neighbours; anyway, I think that's what it means. Conspiracy theories abound—on how the Jewish business class "tried to fool the Jewish working class", or how the earlier arrivals, the German Jews, looked down on the East European arrivistes and tried to exploit them. Jewish communists hack-wrote like Michael Gold are quoted as if their words had real meaning, for example, Gold's reference to Jewish needle-trade workers as having "built up a richer and denser mass culture than that of bank presidents or Greenwich Village poets or even Theatre Guild audiences".

What is especially striking is that while there is much on the "progress-

Baal over the teaching of evolution in school by one John Scopes. H. L. Mencklen in his classic comment on the trial expanded the negative characterization of fundamentalism to include every aspect of American rural or small-town Protestantism. Out of that defeat came withdrawal and some of the elements in the "paranoid style" so well described by Hofstadter.

The victory of agnostic cosmopolitan liberals was complemented by the victory of theological liberals within the mainstream churches. The result was that conservative evangelicalism withdrew from an apostate America and from the kind of social gospel associated with aggressive theological liberalism. The ambivalences of conservatism toward culture, intellect and social reform began to resolve themselves in a phase of pietistic retreat.

This is the end of Dr Marsden's brilliant, lucid and learned account but not the conclusion of the matter for contemporary America. After all, the Space Age Museum in Washington warns visitors that nothing therein should be taken as contradicting Holy Writ. Moreover, it is just as complex a scene today as he describes in the late nineteenth century. One cannot equate fundamentalism, evangelicalism and the moral majority. One cannot assume that a right-wing stance is inevitable, since in other parts of the world the same phenomenon is politically volatile. One cannot guess how far practices like faith healing and exorcism will continue to penetrate even the liberal mainstream. It is certain only that here we have a cautionary tale, important both for the defective social theory of liberals, and their continued survival. They should read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Dr Marsden's book.

or left-wing intellectuals, there is virtually no mention of anti-communist Jewish intellectuals, such as Elliot Cohen, first editor of *Commentary* magazine, who while not a born New Yorker became a significant part of the landscape. His influence on New York cultural politics in the 1950s was enormous, especially among Jewish liberals. Nor are the editors of *Partisan Review*, for the most part New York Jews, referred to. Nor is the important *Menorah Journal*. Nor Sol Levitas, editor of the *New Leader*, and his Menshevik influence on second-generation New York Jews like Daniel Bell and Melvin Lasky.

Moore, assistant professor of Jewish studies at Vassar College, a one-time fashionable girls' school in New York State, argues that Jewish liberalism is "the ideology of American Jewish ethnicity". The author believes that there exists "an apparently integral relationship between Jewishness and liberalism, and on occasion the Jews even used the latter to define the former". Unfortunately for the author, her theory has been overtaken by events—the landslide victory of President Reagan in November 1980—no doubt as the book was in the press. For if one fact was apparent in that election, it was that large numbers of Jews, many of them 1976 supporters of Jimmy Carter, voted for the anti-liberal, conservative candidate.

Obviously something drastic has happened to the thesis that "Jewishness defines American liberalism". It is particularly noteworthy that this book deals with the Jews of New York City, that the Jewish liberalism which once might have supplied the margin of victory for a Senatorial candidate was unable or unwilling to help elect a Jewish liberal Democratic candidate. Instead a conservative Republican, and an unknown at that, was elected by New York's "liberal" voters.

And that's the trouble with sociological history. If you can't control the event, the happening, the fact, theories go to hell. As Alfred Cobban once wrote in a baroque moment: "The sociological historian uses his theory as the criterion for the selection of the relevant historical facts, and then on the basis of those selected facts he illustrates and confirms the theory by which they have been selected. Part of the fascination of general sociological theories is that success is built in."

Ancestral austerities

By J. A. Thompson

MICHAEL J. DEVINE.
John W. Foster
Politics and Diplomacy in the Imperial Era, 1873-1917
187pp. Ohio University Press. \$9.30.
0 8214 0437 7

In the 1950s, State Department aides apparently became accustomed to the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, interrupting discussions of strategy by remarking that "my grandfather had something to say on that subject", and then reading aloud from one of the worn old volumes always placed near his desk. The truth was that Dulles owed much more than his name to his grandfather and predecessor as Secretary of State. John W. Foster seems always to have had a soft spot for his eldest grandson, who had been born in his house in Washington in 1888. He took the boy on fishing expeditions on the shores of Lake Ontario, and later financed a post-graduate year of study at the Sorbonne for the young man, arranged for him to act as secretary to the Chinese delegation to the Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907, and got him his job in the Wall Street law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell by an unashamed exploitation of an old association. Foster was also largely responsible for the career of his son-in-law, Robert Lansing, who himself became Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson.

Foster's own period as Secretary of State was much shorter than that of either Lansing or Dulles—just nine months in 1892-93, about half of them in a lame-duck administration. But, as Michael J. Devine's study shows, there was a good deal more to his career than this brief episode. The son of a leading citizen of Evansville, Indiana, who had been a pioneer in his day, John Foster grew up a strict Presbyterian and anti-slavery Republican in a border district. He enlisted in the Union Army in 1861 at the age of twenty-five, and finished the war as a brigadier-general. Returning to Indiana as a lawyer and newspaper publisher, he became chairman of the Republican state central committee in 1872. Following Grant's election victory, Foster immediately sold his interest in the *Evansville Daily Journal* and journeyed to Washington, where his patron, Senator Morton, instructed him to take his pick from the "Blue Book", or register of federal offices. Conscious of his deficiencies as a diplomat—he had never been abroad and spoke no foreign language—Foster requested appointment as Minister to Switzerland, which he judged "one of the lowest and most unimportant of the diplomatic posts". But this desirable posting was already promised and Foster, slightly to his alarm, was offered Mexico—"the highest and most difficult mission in the American hemisphere".

His success as Minister to Mexico (1873-80), where he not only deftly handled diplomatic matters but, unlike previous American ministers, learned Spanish and travelled widely, laid the basis for Foster's future career. After a brief spell in St. Petersburg (which he found too exotically far from Washington, where he made his living as a lawyer, with several foreign governments among his clients, and served successive administrations as a special envoy and unofficial adviser. In the administration of Benjamin Harrison (1889-93), Foster departed for the ill-fated James G. Blaine in international negotiations long before succeeding him as Secretary of State. After leaving office, Foster served for six months as counsel to the Chinese delegation at the Shimonoseki peace conference following the Sino-Japanese war. He later became, a rather conservative pillar of the peace movement in the United States before the First World War, thereby attracting the wrath of Theodore Roosevelt.

This is the first biography that has been written of Foster, and it is not a long book. This is no doubt due to the fact that, after completing his two volumes of *Diplomatic Memoirs* in 1909, Foster destroyed his voluminous papers, with the exception of "two thin boxes containing only letters to him of a complimentary nature". Devine has found several of Foster's letters in other manuscript collections and used these, as well as State Department records and published material, to produce a study that throws new light on some aspects of his career. One of these is the Chilean crisis of 1891-92 where, apparently on the basis of a hostile account by John Bassett Moore of the State Department, Devine seems to agree with the charge made by Foster's contemporary critics that his attempts to combine acting for foreign rulers with advising the American government involved a clash of interests. If Foster is generally seen from the outside in these pages, that is doubtless largely his own fault.

Unfortunately, Devine is not content "to review the details" of Foster's career, but feels impelled to claim that he was an "extremely influential figure" and that his record "demonstrates clearly the continuity in the evolution of American foreign policy from 'Ulysses S. Grant to Woodrow Wilson'. Neither of these claims seems really justified. Foster was only involved in central policymaking during the Harrison administration, and even then, it is clear that all significant decisions were made by the President himself. The argument for continuity—explicitly contrasted with the view that 1898 represented a "new departure"—again largely rests on the activities of the Harrison administration, particularly its naval building programme and abortive attempts to acquire Hawaii and various naval bases. But the thesis that "the imperial impulse of 1898 was in large measure a result of the 'spiritual diplomacy' of the Harrison administration" has to accommodate the awkward fact that both Harrison and Foster opposed the acquisition of the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other overseas territories inhabited by peoples they considered unfit for self-government.

Perhaps, after all, it is through his descendants that Foster's career achieves its wider significance. The earnest Presbyterian, whose letters to his wife during the Civil War were full of instructions on the running of the Sunday School he had founded and who, "much to the consternation of the diplomatic community in Mexico City", served only "tea and light refreshments" in the US legation, must have been an austere model for his grandson. And John Hay's combative negotiator—Foster's worst enemy would never accuse him of any tendency to mercy or tenderness to an opponent—would have aroused wry smiles among many diplomats in the 1950s. If John Foster Dulles did inherit from his grandfather more than the same office in the Senate Office Building, this would have been the only respect in which the American government has exhibited remarkable continuity with the nineteenth century in the face of the dramatically greater challenges presented by a radically new environment.

The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa and the Americas (314pp. University of Chicago Press. £15.75. 0 299 08490 0) edited by David Eltis and James Wright. Green-Pasternak comprises fifteen original essays and an introduction by Stanley I. Engerman. The essays are grouped geographically. The first section examines the genesis of abolition in England against the background of major contemporary intellectual and social trends. The second relates the slave trade to various developments in Africa. The third examines the mechanics of the illegal slave trade and the efforts of the British, Dutch and French attempts to suppress it. The last group of essays is devoted to one of the central themes in the debate about abolition—the relation between the slave trade and New World demographic and cultural trends.

LAZAR FLEISHMAN.
Boris Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody (Boris Pasternak in the Twenties)
314pp. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag. £19.25.
3 7705 1949 3

Pasternak's first autobiography, *A Safe Conduct* (1929-31), is notoriously a difficult work, much in the way of Mandelstam's novella, *The Egyptian Stamp*, written a little earlier. As Michel Aucouturier pointed out, in a notable paper at the Coriary-Salle symposium on Pasternak in 1975, it observes the poetic mode of Pasternak's prose fiction in the 1920s. The argument, elusive and at times highly philosophical, is presented through a somewhat elliptical series of scenes and images or by gnomic statement; and—a discovery to which Lazar Fleishman makes handsome tribute, since it provided the inspiration of his own book—*A Safe Conduct* has to be read on two levels. When Pasternak writes about the artist in the police state of sixteenth-century Venice, he is implying his own situation in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s.

With an admirable command of detail, Professor Fleishman follows the path of Pasternak through the decade which near its close was already overshadowed by the terror of the 1930s. Yury Zhigrov in Pasternak's novel is made to die, gasping for breath in a Moscow tram, on one of the last days of August 1929, just when two prominent writers, Pilyay and Zamyatin, were being persecuted for the new crime of publishing their work abroad. The last five of Pasternak's twelve closely argued chapters are given to the elucidation of *A Safe Conduct*, which arises out of the author's experience in this setting and defines his position, enabling him to face firmly the still more arduous trials ahead.

Pasternak and Mayakovsky, Pasternak and LEP, the "Left Front of the Arts" with which Mayakovsky and the heirs of Futurism sought to dominate Soviet culture—these are the concerns which provide a focus for the impressive erudition of Fleishman's study. Pasternak as a young poet had been enthralled by Mayakovsky. None the less, the book that brought him an unwilling celebrity in 1922, *My Sister Life* (his poems about the revolution—summer of 1917), had unmistakably its own voice, one that was immensely appealing to Mayakovsky. Pasternak fled bravely to Berlin, but decided that the huge Russian colony there was "characterless" in comparison with Soviet Russia, where the publishing of poetry had started again with volumes by Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam, Khodasevich and many others. Fleishman applies to him the comment that Mandelstam had made on Chadaev, the outspoken critic of Russian society isolated from Western Christendom and its civilization, a hundred years earlier. Chadaev like Pasternak had gone back after seeing the West, and Mandelstam remarks:

I think that a country and a people have justified themselves if they have produced one wholly free man who has wanted and been able to use his freedom.

Pasternak used his without hesitation. On returning, at once he alleged himself with LEP, writing for its journal a poem to celebrate May Day 1923 (which he never put into print again). But his relationship with LEP—and with Mayakovsky—was not at all satisfactory. On both sides suspicion prevailed. The two poets could not admire each other's work at this time, though remaining deeply conscious of former loyalties. Pasternak thought poorly of Mayakovsky's agitational poems; Mayakovsky did not in his heart care for Pasternak's attempts at revolutionary epic, *Nineteen Hundred and Five and Lievenant Schmidt*. And Pasternak came very soon to see that LEP had designs on the future; he must retain as a poet—a freedom complicated for him as for Tsvetaeva

by Rilke, to whose memory *A Safe Conduct* is dedicated. He realized that the logic of LEP's development would prove fatal to Mayakovsky.

This showed at the very first conference of LEP, when a leading member proposed that it should be their role to carry out party directives. Both Mayakovsky and his associate Aseev, a poet who had also been a close friend of Pasternak, opposed this recommendation, pointing forward as it did to the practice of the Union of Soviet Writers, inaugurated in 1934. But Pasternak was convinced that they too shared the false premises on which this view rested, and ignoring its actual advocate, he described Mayakovsky and Aseev in a letter to Mandelstam as "poor, weak knights tearing from humiliation to humiliation for the glory of their unknown and altogether unwanted lady".

Fleishman observes that Pasternak often baffled contemporaries by his disregard of tactical considerations and his refusal to compromise. This led him to take a stand quite inconsistent with what might have been expected. Mandelstam and Akhmatova were not in error when they believed him to be their natural ally, though it would need time for Pasternak to declare himself. On Fleishman's showing he was remarkably clear-sighted, and the apparently bizarre pattern of his thinking had its own strict logic.

Thus in 1925 he wrote a surprisingly extravagant essay on the merits of Kruchenykh, the Futurist master of *zaum'* or "metalinguistic", with whom he had never been in sympathy, and against whose example Mayakovsky was then warning responsible revolutionary poets. Only LEP, Mayakovsky maintained, with its "rational organization" could do the task for which the "chaotic procedures" of Futurism were unfit, namely to reflect "the aspirations and work" of the Soviet Union. Pasternak admired Kruchenykh just because he had remained an unyielding Futurist, and was thus exempt from the banality that LEP promoted.

In July of that year the Central Committee intervened in the dispute between RAPP, the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, and the "yellow-travellers" or "metalinguistic", with whom he had never been in sympathy, and against whose example Mayakovsky was then warning responsible revolutionary poets. Only LEP, Mayakovsky maintained, with its "rational organization" could do the task for which the "chaotic procedures" of Futurism were unfit, namely to reflect "the aspirations and work" of the Soviet Union. Pasternak admired Kruchenykh just because he had remained an unyielding Futurist, and was thus exempt from the banality that LEP promoted.

Pasternak's final rupture with LEP did not come until 1927. The journal *New Left* was at that time engaged in polemics with a lately acquired comrade-in-arms of Pasternak, Polonsky, active on the editorial board of *Novy Mir*. It was to Polonsky that Pasternak confided his intention to break with LEP, whose "artistic perspectives and ideas" he saw were calculated to destroy everything that had made for the originality of Mayakovsky. At the centre of these false perspectives was a doctrine recently evolved within LEP, and readily taken up elsewhere—that of the "social demand". This was redefined in 1930 by one of its originators, Osh. Brak, as the "socialist demand". Polonsky's unanswerable critique of this idea anticipates what Pasternak has to say in *A Safe Conduct*, when he maintains that it must be in the nature of art to deceive its client.

The "social demand", as understood by Aseev, required that the writer should deal only with acceptable facts. Another in the group, Tsvetkov, went on to the inevitable conclusion that poetry ought to be replaced by documentary prose. In

The artist in opposition

By Henry Gifford

his second autobiography, written in the late 1950s, Pasternak shows an unflinching respect for Tsvetkov's frankness in concluding, as Plato had done, that the state could not tolerate poetry. The "nightmare ideology" that had emerged from LEP greatly disturbed Pasternak. Mayakovsky's own position by 1929 was desperate. In his last months, early in 1930, he would apply Coriolanus-like for service with the Voices by joining his temporarily victorious enemies, RAPP. Fleishman's remarks, no mention is made there of his current dispute with LEP but instead he talks of "a potential break" in 1917. And the later *Essay in Autobiography* fills in the account with other facts. *A Safe Conduct* is a difficult work to read, just as Fleishman's commentary is, since much has been expressed obliquely by Pasternak through symbol and the clue can easily be lost. It calls for very close attention, and the weight of cross-reference and exhaustive footnotes in the commentary must be taken cheerfully by the reader.

I have found my initial scepticism, with memories of what Edmund Wilson and others made of *Doctor Zhivago*, overcome by Fleishman's acute responsiveness to the implications of puzzling passages. To give one example: why, after stating that Mayakovsky in the early years of their acquaintance "seldom appeared alone" but with a suite of Futurists, should Pasternak in the same paragraph add abruptly that he then saw for the first time in his life a Primus stove?

The invention did not yet give off a stink, and who thought that it would so pollute life and find for itself such wide diffusion? Fleishman seems justified in seeing a "macaronic pun" on the literal meaning of *primus* and the conception of "first poet of the age", which was the role of Mayakovsky—a different thing, as Pasternak had explained to Tsvetaeva, from being a great poet—and he himself refused it after Mayakovsky's death. The stink Fleishman interprets as referring to the "suite of Futurists", who really had grown noisome in LEP. And he notes how Mayakovsky in a poem of 1929 had proclaimed that the Primus must now give way to gas: it had become obsolete.

These are hints almost certainly eluding most readers, and they contribute to the opaqueness of *A Safe Conduct*, as the same procedure does in *The Egyptian Stamp*. None the less if all Pasternak's facts are symbolic as fact". Being concerned with essence, it reveals this through particulars that are not significant in themselves: any one symbol may be exchanged for another. As a result, are historically exact; for instance, as Fleishman remarks, no mention is made there of his current dispute with LEP but instead he talks of "a potential break" in 1917. And the later *Essay in Autobiography* fills in the account with other facts. *A Safe Conduct* is a difficult work to read, just as Fleishman's commentary is, since much has been expressed obliquely by Pasternak through symbol and the clue can easily be lost. It calls for very close attention, and the weight of cross-reference and exhaustive footnotes in the commentary must be taken cheerfully by the reader.

By this time the recommendations of LEP which Pasternak had been resisting were, even though LEP itself lay in ruins, the official line of the Party. To Pasternak it was plain that the artist would have to accept "risk and danger", since the practice of art always must consign him to opposition. The Party called for obedience to its directives. Pasternak in commenting on the resolution of 1925 had seen that the artist must rely on the maturity and strength of his art alone to become truly intimate with the epoch in which he lived. The Party tried to compel the epoch to "live as the embodiment of a generalization" from which springs the falsity of Socialist Realism. Fleishman distinguishes between the "juridical fixation of fact" that LEP now wanted and the "lyrical" truth sought by Pasternak. Art exaggerates, or, in Pasternak's phrase, it "says more than is necessary" and its truths are "capable of eternal development". "Life goes forward" and the "truth" that does not take account of this process "lags behind, and deceives". This deception, unlike that of the artist to his client, is fraudulent.

Facts for Pasternak only become significant when they are treated as symbols. Hence the riddling definition he gives in *A Safe Conduct*: "Art is realistic as an activity, and

bollic each one has to be inspected closely. "Aesopian language" is familiar enough from Russian literature before 1917, and still flourishes in Soviet times. But Pasternak's imagination is through and through metaphorical. He is seeking for analogies, since the essence declares itself in various forms. To give now an example that Fleishman, like Aucouturier, takes to be of the first importance: Pasternak writes at some length in *A Safe Conduct* about Venice in the time of Veronese and Titian, and, speaking of the lion as emblem of Venice, he describes the *bocca del leone* into which informers dropped secret denunciations. "In time it became a mark of ill-breeding to mention people who had mysteriously fallen into the beautifully moulded slot..." Venice had been a police state and great art had flourished in opposition to this.

In 1932 Pasternak heard Mandelstam read some of his later poems and said to him afterwards: "I envy you your freedom. For me you are a new Khrushchev. And just as alien to me as he is. I need non-freedom." Khrushchev had chosen the life of a wanderer, outside society. It was Pasternak's view, however, that a "flexible" State (one that is aware of history) needs opposition from its artists; and Fleishman concludes that for him art needed the opposition of the State. Pasternak's outburst to Mandelstam appears to confirm this. Eventually the State would threaten Pasternak with exile, and thereby would probably have destroyed him as a poet. But until that moment in 1958 he continued to make the best possible use of non-freedom, achieving with no loss of integrity, and certainly not unimpeded, a "safe conduct" still for the pursuit of his art.

Lazar Fleishman's elaborate study lays the foundation for a more comprehensive and distinct view of Pasternak which will come about when other periods of his life have been subjected to the same faithful scrutiny. He is more enigmatic than Mandelstam, or Akhmatova, or Tsvetaeva; his standing in Soviet literature was ambiguous, and he was able until the very end to avoid catastrophe. But Pasternak never doubted that art is tragedy; and tragedy is impossible without a hero.

Some divorces make great entertainment.



Pursuits of Happiness

The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage
Stanley Cavell

During the '30s and '40s, Hollywood produced a genre of madcap comedies that emphasized reuniting the central couple after divorce or separation. And the female protagonists were strong, independent and sophisticated. Here, Stanley Cavell examines "of those classic movies for their cinematic techniques, and for such varied themes as feminism and masculinity, liberty and interdependence. Included are *Adam's Rib*, *Bringing Up Baby* and *The Philadelphia Story*."

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commentary

A richer dust concealed

By Michael Howard

Galipoli
Empire Cinema, Leicester Square

When he started out on his enterprise, Peter Weir probably hoped to make a major film about a great Australian epic — perhaps an antipodean equivalent of *Birth of a Nation*. The opportunity was magnificent. As anyone who has visited the national shrine at Canberra will know, Australia was made by Gallipoli no less surely than England was made by Crécy and Agincourt or France by Marengo and Austerlitz: not simply by the battles themselves but by the myths that grew up round them afterwards. These heroic dramas gave the peoples involved an identity in both their own eyes and those of the rest of the world; they were the entrance fee to national self-consciousness and independence. From a place you may never have heard of... a story you will never forget: so runs the publicity blurb.

Gallipoli was no less significant in Australian history because it was a disaster. The Australians inherit all the British, and even more the Irish, relish for military disasters, especially when they are none of their own making. Here was an experience quintessentially Australian. A gut loyalty to a country that had driven them out, or from which they had been only too glad to escape, led them unquestioningly into a war that was no concern of theirs, one from which they had nothing evidently to lose or to gain. They sent over the flower of their young men, only to see them massacred in one of those disastrously mismanaged amphibious operations, with which British military history is studied. There is no single redeeming feature of the Gallipoli campaign except the courage of the troops involved. (I nearly wrote

"uncomplaining courage", but what would Australians be if they did not complain?) In France, Australian troops were used little better, but there they had time to develop the skills that made them the outstanding fighters on that unhappy front. But it was Gallipoli that stuck in the memory, with its hopeless but unregretted heroism. These were the dreadful *rites de passage* by which Australia and New Zealand came of age.

There is, as I said, a great film to be made about Gallipoli, as there is a great novel to be written; but Peter Weir has not made it. Somewhere along the line the rats got at it. Anything unacceptable to the box office has been mercilessly eliminated. It is a theme that cries for irony, that quality of which the Australians are normally such masters: the deft understatement, the sardonic mockery, the contrasting images that make their own point. We get none of this. What we do get is a sweetly sentimental story of a simple farm lad from the outback of Western Australia who might have been a great athlete but who threw it all up to join up with his chum to go out and do his bit, and dies gallantly in his first action. There are no shocks, no surprises, nothing to make this anything but a safe, wholesome film for the whole family that can be lucratively syndicated to television companies to be shown on Boxing Day. The photography is predictably beautiful, and so is the hero, a golden lad played by Mark Lee. Such plot as there is centres on his homoerotic friendship with darkly handsome Mel Gibson, with whom he hikes across the Australian desert, whom he loses on joining up, meets again in Egypt for a romantic climb up the Pyramids at dusk, and whose life he eventually saves by giving up to him the cushy job of company runner that he could have kept for himself. The message is underlined

by a record of the male duet from *The Pearl Fishers* that their kindly commanding officer plays to himself on his portable gramophone in his dug-out the night before the attack. Oh, those happy, innocent, pre-Freudian days!

So remarkable is this after all the post-Vietnam anti-war films from the United States that I did not quite know what to make of it. A remote and ineffectual don, I live far from the haunts of fashionable intellectuals, and perhaps I am missing something. Is the whole film really a gigantic spoof, a tongue-in-cheek reconstruction not just of a world of lost innocence, but of an entire *mentality* of the past? Is this in fact irony so deeply hidden that I have missed the point? If so I am sorry. Perhaps Mr Weir is really having his cake and eating it, producing, as Sandy Wilson and Julian Slade did with *The Boy Friend* and *Salad Days*, a work of art so successfully imitative that its sardonic implications are forgotten. If so, he is to be congratulated. But the great film about Gallipoli is still to be made.

All at sea

By Carol Rumens

The End of August
Curzon Cinema, Curzon St.

When it was first published in 1899, *The Awakening* caused a scandal which, unfortunately for Kate Chopin (and unlike the earlier scandal about *Madame Bovary*, a novel with which it has been favourably compared) did not make it a best-seller. Today it seems a distinctly unshocking, sharply perceptive account of the psychological development of a young woman who is deeply at odds with the conventions of the respectable Creole society into which she has married. Edna Pontellier has the problem (commoner in literature than in life) of possessing the emotional capacity, but not the talent, of an artist. Meanwhile the social code decrees that, like the sickeningly exemplary Madame Ratignolle, all women must be "mother-women", their imaginative response limited to worthy thoughts of their husbands and children. What gives the book an uncompromisingly modernist flavour is that its major events — the barely adulterous relationship with Robert Lebrun, the separation of Edna from her husband, and her eventual suicide — emerge almost casually from a marvellously rich orchestration of the heroine's inner experiences, in which such ordinary activities as learning to swim or listening to music play as important a part in her "awakening" as love.

Bob Graham's translation of these emotional textures into a film called *The End of August* (the title-change alone speaks volumes) is perhaps unavoidably a failure, though a distinguished one. Externally, it is faithful to the story; the sets were shot in Alabama, not far from the novel's original locations in Grand Isle and

New Orleans are pristine and beautiful, and the camera lingers almost as attentively on Edna (Sally Sharp) as did the novelist's pen. Unfortunately, no amount of sensitive gazing can reveal what is going on inside so complex a character, the kind of revelation at which the novel is supremely effective.

Part of the problem is one of casting. Sally Sharp, raw-boned and Nordic-looking, conveys the out-of-doors quality of Edna at the expense of her voluptuousness. Her physique alone suggests a determination and frankness that make her enchantment by the slightly precocious juvenile charmer Lebrun (David Marshall Grant) all the more paradoxical. In an early scene in the novel, Edna cries when she is scolded by the priggish Mr Pontellier for neglecting their son's nonexistent fever. No such vulnerability is allowed her in the film. Through the appearance of a new sailor, Edna discovers the possibility of sexual attraction without love. In the book, her insight is given a brief but poignant chapter all to itself: "there was a dull pang of regret... because it was not love which held the cup of life to her lips". In the film the point is simply lost. Again, when, at the end of the novel, Edna kills herself, it is less for the love of Lebrun than because she has seen the end of such love, and has realized "there was no one thing in the world that she desired". The Edna of the film, who strips naked and swims strongly out to sea, hardly looks like a potential suicide; she might as well be a liberated 1980s feminist going for a dip to clear her head. The mid-frame freeze only emphasizes this, suspending her in healthy vitality. Kate Chopin's Edna is a far more interesting and pitiful character, whose death-wish seems to express an almost existential despair, not just of the female condition but of the human one.

musicians, from a sensitive account of a period in the life of Charlie Parker and his ambivalent relationship with a French music critic. The lunatic fringe of mauve-haired black mystic band-leader Sun-Ra: I aim to bypass this whole philosophy of life more than of music is *Taijane Farlow* by Lorena of the *Barber-Surgens* of York. Excerpted MS 2572, is not a famous book, but equally certainly it was a famous advance for all of us when the medical doctrines it retailed were superseded. From Galen of Aristotle an unfortunate male patient stands naked before us, his blood draining away down twenty lifelines into balloons of mistaken instruction — directions as to where to make the appropriate slits for bleeding.

So it is a relief to hear Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim) declare in *Bücher und Schriften*, Basel, 1588, and not before time, "I have not patched up these books after the fashion of others from Hippocrates, Galen or anyone else, but by experience, the great teacher, I have composed them." Specific diseases were to be treated by specific chemical remedies and not by attempting to right a theoretical imbalance of the four humours, not even by the cupping of the York frontal appendage. And it is a relief, too, to watch the beginnings of anatomical dissection (via one of the earliest examples of colour printing) in Johannes de Ketham's *Fasciculus di Medicina*, Venice, 1493, even if the means used are not, as yet, particularly specific — an oblique, curved butcher's knife in the hand of a surgeon with rolled up sleeves whose toes appear to twitch at the sight, and under whose last resting place of a trestle-table a wicker egg-basket sits, awaiting the excised parts.

However, one of the early results of this research, a gothic giant neatly flayed to reveal his musculature, and comes lurching towards us out of an entirely unbrothered Swiss landscape, or turns sideways, the flowing meat on his bones labelled A-Z, sleepwalking, despite his lack of eyelashes, back to his grotto in the pages of *De humani corporis fabrica*, Basel, 1543; for Andreas Vesalius, unlike Galen, who relied only on animals, really did dissect human bodies with exactness and at the age of twenty-nine published the first attempt at a complete and observed account of human anatomy.

A nod towards natural history follows, and the exhibition suddenly erupts in a blaze of rich colour and luxurious detail, a resplendent medieval, a regal hare, a shepherd and shepherdess engaged in a little natural selection of their own in the top

Famous Books in Science British Library

Beneath the white and gold heliocentric ceiling of the King's Library, the British Library has mounted a startlingly ambitious ten-case study in the history of science. Ranging from the long-legged and red-tipped young girls with wings who are cranking the fourteenth-century planets round their orbits within the crystal spheres in Harleian MS 4940, f.28 *Tractatus de brevibus d' amore*, to Rutherford's altogether less enticing paper in *The Philosophical Magazine* for 1919 announcing the splitting of the atom, it encompasses astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, mathematics and engineering.

The airborne executive damsels give way all too quickly to the first of the big books: the *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, Nuremberg, 1543, here laid open at a diagram of the circling planets, with SOL printed firmly at the centre — the work which took Copernicus seventeen years to write (and a further eleven to be persuaded to publish in full) and a copy of which reached him on his death bed. There are, however, one or two early surprises. Walked in by the towering cages of the King's Books, which serve to remind us just how many volumes in the history of science have not been quite so famous (Smith, *Insects of Georgia Eng. and Fr.*), it is comforting to discover that one or two have none the less surreptitiously slipped into the exhibition itself. *The Gull's book of the Barber-Surgens of York*, Excerpted MS 2572, is not a famous book, but equally certainly it was a famous advance for all of us when the medical doctrines it retailed were superseded. From Galen of Aristotle an unfortunate male patient stands naked before us, his blood draining away down twenty lifelines into balloons of mistaken instruction — directions as to where to make the appropriate slits for bleeding.

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right-hand corner, opposite the columned arms of the Medici, in the elaborate illumination, margins of C. Plinius Secundus, *Historia Naturalis*, Nicola Jenson, 1472. Pliny's compilation of all the learning of the ancient world, in which he quotes and carefully acknowledges over 400 authorities and which remained a standard work of reference throughout the Middle Ages.

Turning to more practical concerns, we are presented with illustrations of a mining district in Saxony — Bruegel's pictures of miners working in a forest which the wolves have only just left, pushing wooden trucks along wooden rails, diverting streams down wooden troughs and rewarded, it would seem, by a glimpse through the well-made window of a solid log-cabin of a plump Saxon matron and her outsize baby in *De re metallica* by Georgius Agricola, Basel, 1556. The work describes the mysteries of ventilating, smelting, assaying and pumping; the preparation of saltpetre and nitric acid; the manufacture of glass, sulphur and alum; and the detection of minerals using magnetic needles.

Less peacefully, *Dere militari*, Verona, 1472, by Roberto Valturio, engineer to Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, the "first printed book with illustrations of a technical character", contains all the usual engines for printing us out of our castles, lobbing rocks into our tower bedrooms, or for turning our battlements into a race track for rolling balls of marble; but it also features designs for a tank, a diver's suit, paddle-wheels and a life belt — and, indeed, when Leonardo was a child engineer in Cesare Borgia, he possessed a copy, and some of his drawings seem to owe to Valturio more than their mere inspiration.



One of the earliest depictions of an anatomical dissection, in one of the earliest examples of colour printing — four colours laid on by means of stencils. The picture comes from Johannes de Ketham's *Fasciculus di Medicina*, Venice, 1493, in the exhibition reviewed here.

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commentary

Through the Pillars of Hercules

By Redmond O'Hanlon

publish. It was left to Edmund Halley, then twenty-two, to pay for the publication of the *Principia* and to see through the press the book which stated the four laws of motion and the essentials of classical dynamics, demonstrated the "frame of the system of the world" which went unchallenged for over 250 years (until James Clerk Maxwell's papers of the 1860s, in Case Ten) and which was potent enough, when applied to calculate the centrifugal force of the moon and the gravitational force exerted by the earth on the moon, to produce a theoretical orbit which actually matched the moon's observed orbit. The *Opticks* is a collection of papers proving that white light is composed of lights of different colours, and concerned with sorting out the rainbow, the aberrations of lenses, Newton's rings, and the double refraction of Iceland Spar. The *Treatises* were added to show Leibnitz that Newton knew all about the differential calculus before he did.

Dotted near these three major planets are lesser stars: Francis Bacon's magisterial and none too imaginative insistence on experiment and observation, for instance, and his naïve but productive ideal of co-operative inquiry, are set out in *Instauratio magna. Novum Organum, sive Indicia vera de interpretatione naturae*, London, 1620, complete with an engraved frontispiece showing a ship of the line surrounded by a whale, a dolphin and something suspiciously like an unventilated monster of the deep, sailing gingerly out from the Old World, through the Pillars of Hercules, towards new discoveries.

Robert Boyle ranks very high with two books displayed — his *New Experiments Physico-mechanical touching the Spring of Air*, Oxford, 1662, in which he examined the basic physical properties of air and announced his law that the volume of a gas at constant temperature varies inversely with the pressure, and *The Sceptical Chymist*, London, 1680 (disgracefully, a second edition) in which he expounded his "mechanical philosophy" that matter is composed of different corpuscles, each identical group of which constitutes a chemical element.

But it is Robert Hooke, undoubtedly, who visually steals this entire, very large, show. The man who, looking down his microscope at a flea, marvelled at "the mechanical power which Providence has immured within these living walls of Jet" certainly preserved his delighted amazement (tact in his *Micrographia*; or, some *Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies made by Magnifying Glasses*, London, 1665. His own magnificently bold engraving of a fly buzzes for our attention; it menaces us with eyes like moons in nets; it is tasked like a wart-hog, horned like a rhino, quilled like a porcupine; it seethes with offensive weaponry right down to its suckers; and

All the hidden part of its body is covered in a most curious blue shining armour, looking exactly like a polished piece of steel brought to that blue colour by annealing, all of which armour is very thick beset with abundance of tapering bristles, such as grow on its back, as is visible enough in the figure.

The exhibition then moves rapidly forward towards our own times, the books themselves becoming more familiar; the discoveries they first announced to the world still having obvious effects in our lives; the controversies they aroused still sometimes invested with real emotion, and the attitude of mind which produced them as we share. In biology, Linnaeus is honoured for his "great system of classification by sexual characteristics with his earliest publication, his *Systema naturae*, Liden, 1735; and George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, for his equally impressive general survey of natural history in forty-four volumes, in which he oscillated between radical evolutionary theory and orthodox creation, so retaining his

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In the years between the French Revolution and our own times there has been widespread revolt against the various official churches that emerged triumphant from the turmoil of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Dr McLeod looks at the religious movements and at the increasing difference between the religious life of the working class and that of the urban middle class in the growing towns and cities, and in the countryside. £8.95
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Councils and Synods

With other Documents
Relating to the English
Church. Volume I (Parts
I and II) A.D. 871-1204
Edited by Dorothy
Whitelock, Martin Brett
and Christopher
N.L. Brooke

This volume is designed to fill the gap between the conclusion of the English section of Hadden and Stubbs's *Councils and Synods with Other Documents, relating to the English Church* Volume II (edited by Sir Maurice Powicke and Professor C.R. Cheney published in 1964). £46

Oxford University Press

Hop, skip and jump

By Hugo Williams

London Film Festival
National Film Theatre

The life of a film critic at a festival has strong elements of the Chaplinesque. Our days are lived at top speed, on one foot, either pursued by or in pursuit of bewildering visions. Like a schoolboy trying to visit all the tube stations in a single day, the London Film Festival reviewer had to be in at least two of the NFI's cinemas at the same time from 10.30 am till midnight every day for three weeks.

The programme of over a hundred features was divided into various sections, of which the most interesting were: "Controversy", American Independents, British Cinema, Jazz Films and the central section of thirty-five films by established directors from all over the world. The "Gala" films of the festival were *Galipoli* by Peter Weir (Australia), *Prize of Love* by Christopher Miles (Britain), *Monnie Debray* by Frank Perry (USA) and the silent epic by King Vidor, *The Crowd*, the apogee of silent film technique, which was accompanied by a full orchestra playing a new score by Carl Davis, who wrote the music for *Napoleon* last year.

My favourite film was a typically disappointing experience: *Up to the Mountains and the Sea* by a poet called Ciriack Malvan, who made his first feature in 1959 (*The Boys from the Bush*) and has now "come to be regarded as second only to Paradjanov in the Armenian cinema". The film is a gloriously beautiful description of the mountains of Old Armenia that we can see in the film. It is a beautiful film, but it is a pity that it is so short.

of stories about a woman's humiliating search for a wife for her unmarried adopted son and his own finding of one in a brothel. It is an apparently simple piece which uses the middle range of light: bright without being pale, rich without becoming dark. By contrast, *Eiyakura*, by the Japanese Shohei Imamura, about the "What-the-hell" riots at the end of the seventeenth century, is an apparently complex film which uses the impenetrably dark end of the light range with predictable results. It is so cluttered with subsidiary characters, subplots and bamboo thickets that every new event seems to drag what little has been established back into the muddy canyon it is struggling through most of the time. "American" music wars with Japanese to point the present-day parallel: Imamura has said, "I wanted to observe how the masses at the end of the Tokugawa period, in a kind of uneasy situation similar to today, lived, acted, thought and died while idolizing freedom." The trouble is that in the film they do all these things simultaneously, idolizing phos.

Present-day El Salvador might have been expected to present a genuinely chaotic subject for directors Diego de la Torre (*El Salvador*), *The People Will Write* and Glenn Silber and Tete Vasconcelos (*El Salvador*), *Another Vietnam*, but these two terrifying documentaries by brave men, drawn in brutally simple pictures of the hell that exists in that country between the people who are staying because their land is used for growing coffee, and the few families of the oligarchy, backed by the Government and America, who are not because they own the plantations. "They send troops to kill us and they call that agrarian reform," says Archbishop Romero, assassinated before the end of *Another Vietnam*.

nam? "It is only Americans who are infiltrating our country," says another doomed patriot.

An indictment of the squalid dealings of Western capitalism no less potent for being metaphorical is Holma Sanders-Brahma's *No Mercy, No Future*, a true account of a few months in the life of a schizophrenic girl who alternates between suicide attempts and offering her body to criminals and deadbeats with the thins like Chris to Senator Long's sinister fact-finding mission to El Salvador, after which American aid was resumed, takes place in the same time-span and is fleetingly referred to. The film is unscribed, a brilliant mixture of cinematic styles: fantastic and neo-realistic by turn.

A clash of cultures is endemic to any good festival, and many of the films presented this year are themselves records of intrusion and dislocation. Kazimierz Kutz, from Poland, was assistant director of Andrzej Wajda on *A Generation* and *Candor*. In *The Bands of One* Rosary, a redneck miner refuses to be evicted from his much-loved cottage by taking over a bleak development of lower-blocks, marching across what he refers to as "our late-lamented Poland". Silena is a sooty, industrial part of Poland, but as with Miklos Jancs's Hungarian plain in his *The Tyrant's Heart*, also presented at the Festival, it finds its own weird beauty on film. The ruralisation outside and the neat traditional indoors make a neat diagram of the film's wider interests without disturbing its comic pace.

Just Menzel of Czechoslovakia has previously collaborated with the writer Bohumil Hrabal on *Clauely Observed*. Their *Cutting in Short* is about the impact of the 1920s on the peaceful life of a rustic brewery, "outlining short" time, space,

horses' tails, moustaches, drinks, tables, skirts and, most importantly, the blond hair of the brewery manager's. Monroese wife (Magda Valsarova). Humour and vitality are the film's natural properties, but it resembles those of Jacques Tati in its strenuously humane encouragement of man's funny little ways.

Ten years after his *success de scandale* about Wilhelm Reich, *Mysteries of the Organism*, the Yugoslav director Dusan Makavejev returns somewhat maligned with *Montenegro*, a film dedicated to and about "the new" invisible nation of Europe, eleven million immigrants and guest workers who moved north to exploit the rich and prosperous people, bringing with them their filthy habits, bad manners and a smell of garlic. I was reminded of *Belle de Jour*; a blonde American in her thirties (Susan Anspach) grows restless with her clean and caged existence in a suburb of Stockholm and runs off to live in the back of an illicit niterie run by Serbs. The film is transparently partisan in deciding whose side the vital life-force are on: the cabaret of a remote-controlled dildó and a naked nineteen-year-old is alone worth the price of admission.

To redress the sexist balance, there was Connie Field's *Rose the River*, which headed the festival's American Independents section. As for Pearl Harbor, America recruited thousands of women to heavy industry to fill the gaps left by the call-up, and *Rose* takes the stories of five women keen to try more-demanding work than the shopgirl/waitress jobs on offer in pre-war America. The warmth and fun of the girls is finely contrasted with naive propaganda films of the period.

The jazz section of the festival was devoted to all manner of American

1550

(Famous Books in Science continued)

good name but losing his credibility. His book, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, Paris, 1744-85 is open at a plate of the Quaderou, a bearded monkey uncannily like a member of the French Academy and seeming to suggest that he has himself built the hut which stands behind him. And of course Charles Darwin is here with *On the Origin of Species*, London, 1859.

For geology, really only William Smith is included, the lowly surveyor who noticed that each rock stratum contained fossils peculiar to itself, and one of whose meticulous and beautiful maps from his pioneer geological survey of Britain is displayed. Even Charles Lyell is absent, but at least *The Origin* is open at the magnificent beginning of Chapter Ten, "On the Geological Succession of Organic Beings", which makes plain Darwin's indebtedness to him.

In medicine, loosely defined, Edward Jenner is celebrated for his discovery of vaccination (the evils of which an ageing Alfred Russel Wallace was still mistakenly denouncing in *The Wonderful Century* as late as 1900) with *An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Variolæ Vaccinæ*, London, 1798, open at a painting of the once fair hand of a milkmaid now pustulating with cowpox; Louis Pasteur, for his bringing to birth of bacteriology, with the "Mémoire sur la fermentation appelée lactique" (1857); and Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis for his heroic insistence that the (usually fatal) puerperal fever in his Vienna maternity hospital was caused by doctors' putting their unwashed hands into women to examine them before childbirth. Semmelweis's *Die Aetiologie der Puerperal-Fieber*, Budapest, Vienna and Leipzig, 1861, reports a five-sixths reduction in mortality once compulsory washing in calcium chloride solution had been introduced. Karl Ernst von Baer is remembered for his investigation of the egg mysteries of embryology; and Sigmund Freud wanders in like a bad dream with *Die Traumdeutung*, Leipzig and Vienna, 1900.

In chemistry, Joseph Priestley and Antoine Laurent Lavoisier win their places for the dismantling of the phlogiston theory, the discovery of oxygen and the formulation of the principle of the conservation of matter, and John Dalton for the atomic theory which he propounded in *A New System of Chemical Philosophy*, Manchester, 1808, but it is the physicists who dominate the closing sections of this visual bibliographical history.

Michael Faraday is remembered for his *Experimental Researches in Electricity*, London, 1820-45, in which he described his generation of electricity

by electromagnetic induction. And his demonstration that polarized light is affected by a magnetic field inspired James Clerk Maxwell towards the calculation of the four differential equations which formed the basis of the theory of electromagnetic waves, brought electricity and light within the scope of dynamics, and allowed physical phenomena to be considered in terms that were not mechanical. They also formed a ready-made framework for the results of William Konrad Roentgen's accidental discovery of X-rays, here dramatically illustrated with a photograph of the ghostly, bony interior of a colleague's hand, from "Über eine neue Art von Strahlen" 1896-97.

Three profoundly impressive papers follow: Max Planck's "Zur Theorie des Gesetzes der Energieverteilung im Normal spectrum", 1900, firstly, in which he stated that energy is emitted and absorbed, not in continuous indefinitely divisible currents but in small, discrete indivisible units or *quanta* - a theory which helped to explain wave-length, the specific heats of solids, the photochemical effects of light, the orbits of electrons, the wavelengths of the lines of the spectrum, X-rays, the velocity of rotating gas molecules and the distances between the particles of a crystal. Albert Einstein then shakes his great shaggy head with the sample paper "Die Grundlage der allgemeinen Relativitätstheorie" from the *Annalen der Physik* for 1916. Developing Maxwell's equations, which had correlated light and electricity and introduced fields of force to replace Newtonian theories of action-at-a-distance, Einstein set out to integrate gravity into his "physical reality" . . . thought of as represented by continuous fields, governed by partial differential equations. He concluded that matter itself is a form of energy - that a quantity of energy equals the product of mass times the square of the velocity of light. Such a theoretical astonishment can only be matched by the improbability of the final practical demonstration which succeeds it, in Ernest Rutherford's "Collision of Alpha Particles with Light Atoms" from *The Philosophical Magazine* for 1919. Rutherford had already discovered and named the alpha, beta and gamma particles given off by radioactive substances; here he reports the alpha particles, in collision with nitrogen atoms, liberated from them the nuclei of hydrogen atoms. Nuclear fission had finally made the alchemist's dream come true: one element had changed into another.

Boldly selected, well displayed and especially lucidly and carefully explained, this is a magnificent exhibition of the real riches, the intellectual splendours of scientific history.

In the purple

By Patricia Craig

True Confessions
Gate Cinema, Russell Square

From its punning title on, Uli Grosbard's *True Confessions* plays neatly with ideas of Catholicism and corruption, mortal sins and mortal wounds, grace and disgrace. The story (based on a novel by John Gregory Dunne, who also wrote the screenplay, in collaboration with Joan Dillon) concerns two Irish-American brothers in the early post-war era: a policeman, the other a priest. The policeman (Robert Duvall) is preoccupied with the murder of a prostitute who has ended up in two pieces; the priest (Robert De Niro), who is in line for promotion, understands diplomacy and expediency just as well as ministering. St Veronica's Church building fund prospers under Monsignor Desmond Spillane's direction: he is the voice that goes out nightly on the radio, inviting Catholic Lay Angels to join with him in prayer for the world. We remember that this was the time of the Rosary Crusade and its accompanying embarrassments.

A Robert De Niro makes a lovely and disarming Monsignor Spillane, against Robert Duvall's colder, more volatile Tom. Cyril Cusack appears briefly and entertainingly as some kind of parish priest who makes no secret of his admiration for the priest's spiritual mission: here his brother comes in search of absolution, and receives gratitude instead.

spects, "for the good of the church". It's also for the good of the church that a shady, overweight magnate, Jack Amsterdam (Charles Durning), should be voted Catholic layman of the year, and presented with a sash proclaiming as much, at a well-attended banquet; however, Sergeant Tom Spillane knows a thing or two about Amsterdam's extra-ecological activities, and doesn't hesitate to denounce St Veronica's prime benefactor. This does not help his brother's career in the church, but his brother, ultimately a true Christian, doesn't hold it against him. Blood - the kind encountered in a criminal investigation anyway - is thicker than holy water.

True Confessions is a glossy, slow-moving production, impeccably acted, which makes the most of its fundamental contrasts: the purple saint of the church's dignified efforts to exorcise the sins of the city, the dry, self-righteous Catholic sumptuousness looks distinctly gaudy beside the repulsive bleakness of a graveyard room. On the one hand, we are offered transubstantiation, on the other, a real-life body and blood - a whole baptism of it. (No wonder the priest complains about a "stiff old altar wine.") We learn from a prologue that Monsignor Spillane, instead of becoming an auxiliary bishop as his superior had planned, has followed the steepest decline, his next stop, to an out-of-the-way parish where he reigns as a proper priest of his spiritual mission: here his brother comes in search of absolution, and receives gratitude instead.

Half truths

By Harold Hobson

Incident at Tulse Hill
Hampstead Theatre

Robert East's play is directed by Harold Pinter, and reflects many Pinterian interests: marital betrayal, for example, and lodgers who by turns tell long anecdotes marked by internal incongruity, obsession and an infinite flow of words, and are bewildered into inexplicability. It presents its story in a manner that the first-night audience seemed to find baffling; for half of it is told after the fashion of the *nouveau roman* (Pinter's own fashion), in which the author knows no more than the words his characters speak, and half in the manner of a work by an author-as-God, who knows everything and puts all his cards on the table. Furthermore, the play's vital couple of phrases occur in the one part of the drama, and the vital incident in the other; and this vital incident - its pitiful indecency transformed by the finesse of the dialogue and the delicate playing of Alison Fiske and Maurice Denham into

Filling the virgin gap

By Hermione Lee

Virginia Fly is Drowning
BBC TV

Virginia Fly is a virgin in her thirties living in the Surrey suburbs with her prissy, bossy, prurient mother and her weak, affable father ("I was very fond of Mozart till your mother threw away the gramophone"). She teaches art, though we only see her staring out of the studio window, wears neat severe clothes, and goes to concerts with an elderly but attractive German Jewish professor of music. At night, though, she has wild erotic dreams of a handsome young man bursting into her bedroom (rather as in those Black Magic advertisements) and she has been waiting for twelve years for her American penfriend Charlie to come and marry her - or "at least seduce" her.

This quiet existence is broken into by a television crew making a programme about premarital love - or, in Virginia's case, the lack of it. ("You'd fill the virgin gap," Virginia sighs her fantasies "I'll be in a

something beautiful and touching - is so brief, so unemphatic that many people do not even notice that it is there, taking the last scene to be an experiment in the theory advanced in *The Browning Version* that an anti-climax can sometimes be surprisingly effective, whereas it is not an anti-climax at all, but a climax, in which the author demonstrates his thesis that between coming to a decision and finding out the truth there is often a great gulf fixed. *Incident at Tulse Hill* is said to be Robert East's first play, and it is as likely to be misunderstood and dangerously underrated as was the first London play of its director.

It opens in a coroner's court. An inquest is being held on Henry Hopkins (Maurice Denham), an elderly, unemployed and discouraged actor. Undoubtedly Hopkins might shoot himself through the head in a tunnel on the Underground, and undoubtedly when the police find where he has run, his landlady is uncommonly eager to enter the tunnel before the inspector, the fatal shot being fired before he catches up with him. The coroner regards this as suspicious; the Inspector and the delicate playing of Alison Fiske and Maurice Denham into

large field breast high in buttercups - I'll see this beautiful young herdsmen - he'll lash the buttercups with his stick in a titillating sort of way" in an interview with "Geoffrey Wisdom", a media monster of self-regarding pseudishness. Then Charlie turns up for his London visit and for the long-awaited seduction. He is another kind of monster, complete with red braces, lascivious yodelling laugh, foul table manners and, as it transpires, a wife and child. On the rebound from that disaster, Virginia meets a smooth rich salesman to whom she's introduced by Mrs Thompson, a fat sentimental vulgar lady who tipsles, years for her long-ventilated teas, in the Ritz with "real gentlemen", affects a posh accent which keeps slipping, and becomes very chummy with Virginia's mum. The try for love and passion with Ulick is another failure - jealous wife bursts into the Habitat bedroom just too soon - so, at last, after seeing the nice professor give a magnificent lecture on Mahler, she agrees to marry him, and lets mother dress her up in pink for the wedding. But though the Professor's jolly violinist friend urges her to bury her dreams, Virginia Fly knows she is doing the wrong thing: she's never had "a perfect love".

Among this week's contributors

K. R. ANDREWS's books include *The Spanish Caribbean, Trade and Plunder, 1530-1630*, 1978.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN's books include *Nine Lies About America*, 1972.

T. J. BRYNON is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

ROBIN BUSS is a lecturer in French at Woolwich College of Further Education.

FILIPPO DOMINI was formerly Director of the Italian Institute in London.

GARTH POWDEN is a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

E. B. FRYER is co-editor of *Historical Studies of the English Parliament, 1570*.

ANTHONY GIDDENS's books include *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 1976, and *Studies in Social and Political Theory*, 1977.

JANET GREGORY's *Parliament: A Critical Study*, 1977, has recently been reassessed as a paperback.

ROY HARRIS is Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Oxford. His *The Language Myth* was published earlier this year.

PAUL HEBLES is a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster.

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MICHAEL HOWARD is Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford.

PETER HUNTER BLAIR is Emeritus Reader in Anglo-Saxon History in the University of Cambridge.

SAMUEL HYNES's most recent book is *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s*, 1976.

JOHN KERRIGAN's books include *The Face of Battle*, 1976.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published next spring.

SIR EDMUND LEACH's books include *Genesis as Myth*, 1970, and *Culture and Communication*, 1976.

HERMIONE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen: an Estimation* was published earlier this year.

LAWRENCE LERNER's collections of poems include *The Man I Killed*, 1980.

PETER LEWIS is a lecturer in English at the University of Durham.

DAVID MARTIN's books include *A Sociology of English Religion*, 1957. He is co-editor of *Sociology and Theology: Alliance and Conflict* which was published last year.

G. B. MILNER is Professor of Australasian Studies at the School for Oriental and African Studies, London.

REDMOND O'HANLON has recently completed a study of Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin.

R. A. PEACE is Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Hull. His most recent book, *The Enigma of Gogol*, was published earlier this year.

DAVID QUINN was Professor of Modern History at the University of Liverpool from 1956 to 1975. He is the editor of *The Last Voyages of Thomas Cavendish, 1775, and New American World: a Documentary History of North America to 1672*, 1979.

CAROL RUMENS's collection of poems *Unplayed Music* was published earlier this year.

COLIN RUSSELL is a lecturer in German at the University of Kent.

NICHOLAS SHIRMINGTON is a Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall.

JULIAN SYMOND's most recent crime novel, *Sweet Adelaide*, was published last year.

J. A. THOMPSON is a Fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

G. M. WILSON is Keeper of Edged Weapons at the Tower of London.

HUGO WILLIAMS's *No Particular Place to Go* was published earlier this year.

These much quoted and widely misunderstood words have nothing whatever to do with performance. When they occur in the course of a long letter to Lizzy (September 2, 1852) in which Wagner inveighed against composers like Beethoven and Raff, it is a proposal of Benjamin Collins, and not of Wagner himself, who, instead of forging ahead to create something fresh and genuine, persisted in the hopeless attempt to "galvanize and resuscitate" old opera that had never had any life in them in the first place.

Like Verdi, Richard Strauss and most other operatic creators of whose wishes we are aware, Wagner had very precise and detailed ideas as to how he wanted his works

that it is their duty to find out the truth. The coroner (Michael Forrest) corrects him; their duty is to discover the cause of death. This indeed he does, and accurately; nevertheless half his verdict is wrong. The truth lies elsewhere than in his amplifying statement.

It is to be found in a series of flashbacks that reveal the background of Hopkins's life, and seem to be (but chiefly are not) the background of the life of his landlady, John (Michael J. Jackson). For all John's subtly randy escapades it is his hurt and neglected wife Helen (Alison Fiske) who arouses passion; and this, a matter which the author treats with extreme subtlety, is where the coroner goes wrong. It is where the audience may go wrong, too, for it is easy to take John's adventures for the erotic centre of a play to which they are no more than the fascinating and skilful decoration. *Incident at Tulse Hill* is essentially the sort of play that Marguerite Duras might have written, for she also does not despise melodrama. As for the big scene (which is also such a tiny scene) between Helen and the old and desperate actor, neither Mme Duras nor the director himself could have written it better.

(1) He asks how it is possible. I should have represented C. H. Sisson and Jack Clemo while omitting Yvor Winters and Robert Lowell. My friend the late Yvor Winters was firmly, though I think regretfully, a non-believer, and none of his poems pretend otherwise. Thus I exclude him for just the reason that Cameron finds good in the cases of Emily Brontë and Arthur Hugh Clough, Thomas Hardy and Philip Larkin. As for the late Robert Lowell, also my friend, since I quote very much in my Introduction, Cameron may be sure that my exclusion of him, whether right or wrong, was at all events not unconsidered. The trouble that I have with Lowell's poems on Christian themes is glanced at on page 79 of my *Trying to Explain* (Carcanet).

(2) Cameron contends that my inclusion of H. P. Lyte's "Abide with me" is "a plain breach" of my undertaking to present nothing that is not poetry in a rather exacting sense. I refer him to a spirited and closely argued appreciation of this poem by J. R. Watson in his Durham Inaugural Lecture given last February and now in print.

(3) He finds it "baffling" that I should represent Blake by the one poem, "Jerusalem". But my predecessor Lord David Cecil in 1940 confessed to uncertainty whether Blake's poetry could be called Christian at all; "Jerusalem" is the one poem by him which has been Christianized as it were posthumously, by worshippers who, singing it, give it a meaning that perhaps its author did not intend.

(4) I'm sure Cameron could soon outdo me in knowledge of the theology of the Reformation, but some years ago when I was baptized into the Anglican communion, I was certainly instructed that Holy Matrimony is in a strict sense a sacrament of that Church.

DONALD DAVIE,
Department of English, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235.

Small deviations from the appropriate speed, course and height, and errors in the estimation of wind speed and direction (the latter two, by necessity, having to be guessed when briefing bombing crews) meant enormous errors in strike position.

The "accidental" bombing by the USAAP of the Auschwitz camp was simply a normal bombing error.

D. W. THOMAS,
The Dell, Kiljay, Swansea.

There appears an unfortunate slip in his book on page 128 of a date which he misquotes from my book (*P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master*, Garnstone, 1975). Mr Green mistakes that the short story "At Gelsenheim" was published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1921, whereas it appeared in that publication in 1915. The confusion on Mr Green's part arose because of his neglect to read my Note which appears at the beginning of the Short Story Appendix in which I state that all dates follow the sequence: Year-Month-Day, so that the particular listing for this short story is given as 1915-8-21. This means that it appeared in the 21 August 1915 issue. In the interest of international scholarship,

These much quoted and widely misunderstood words have nothing whatever to do with performance. When they occur in the course of a long letter to Lizzy (September 2, 1852) in which Wagner inveighed against composers like Beethoven and Raff, it is a proposal of Benjamin Collins, and not of Wagner himself, who, instead of forging ahead to create something fresh and genuine, persisted in the hopeless attempt to "galvanize and resuscitate" old opera that had never had any life in them in the first place.

Like Verdi, Richard Strauss and most other operatic creators of whose wishes we are aware, Wagner had very precise and detailed ideas as to how he wanted his works

staged, and expressed them, not only in his copious stage directions, but (again like Verdi) in a stream of "production books" and pamphlets which he pressed on theatrical managements. The notion that his now-famous phrase could conceivably have meant, "Put an irrelevant and disfiguring coat of paint on my perfectly sound and watertight structure", comical enough in itself, becomes doubly absurd when we find him telling Lizzy, in the very same letter, "I have written tolerably comprehensive instructions for the performance of *Tannhäuser*, and have had them printed as a pamphlet and sent a sufficient number of copies to the theatres which have bought the score. I hope this will be of use. I send you herewith half-a-dozen copies." So much for the quaint idea of Wagner as a potential, though posthumous, enthusiast for novel and outlandish perversions of his own carefully planned and meticulously described creations.

DESMOND SHAW-TAYLOR,
15 Furlong Road, London N7.

to the editor

'Hollywood's Vietnam'

Sir, - From Léon Daudet to William Buckley, the extreme right-wing can claim a reasonable complement of droll polemicists. Richard Grenier, the resident film critic of *Commentary* who reviewed my book *Hollywood's Vietnam* (December 4), unfortunately isn't one of them. His facts turn out to be rather more original than his opinions; and even if it was to be expected that, bereft of both ideas and will, he would have recourse to false emphasis and outright distortion, I really can't let his foolish assertions pass without comment.

Shortness of space - obviously not, incidentally, a problem for Richard Grenier, who was permitted by you to fill over two-thirds of a long review with allegations and personal prejudices which were not only unsubstantiated but also irrelevant - forces me to forego any attempt at a comprehensive reply, so I will confine myself to some of the points Grenier makes which do at least touch on the concerns of Adair's book.

Although, in *The Deer Hunter*, the scene of the singing of "God Bless America" may, in that it reflects accurately America's craving after Vietnam for a healing sense of unity, be more than "trumpetry" (as Grenier criticizes Adair for calling it), the film itself must be viewed by any objective critic, on similar grounds of accuracy, as a film about Vietnam (which is the point of view from which Adair was surely looking at it), as not just a piece of "trumpetry" but actually an attempt completely to rewrite history. The film presents its Americans as heroic escapees from apparently inherently and debasedly vicious Asians, while in truth, of course, it was millions of Indo-Chinese who were forced to become escapees from - or, as often as not, mortal or mutilated victims of - the fortunes applied by Americans with so much more devastating lack of discrimination. Since *The Deer Hunter* does not offer even a hint of the massive destruction wrought by Americans in Vietnam, it surely deserves, as it would be accorded by any critic who wished to see the truth rather than convenient and apologist lies recorded on the screen, the "black marks" awarded it by Adair. A concern for at least minimal standards of accuracy is also presumably the reason why *Apocalypse Now*, which does at least admit the destructiveness of the American military machine in Vietnam, is more to Adair's "liking" as Richard Grenier so condescendingly puts it - though *Apocalypse Now*, too, is a deeply propagandist film, attempting to persuade its viewers, by showing the regular US Army purging its "unusual" (irregular) forces, that the official American intervention in Vietnam was in no way criminal or immoral.

As for the rest of Richard Grenier's review, may I suggest to you that you bear in mind that Vietnam is still too close for even the most detached historians to contemplate as a subject with any objective certainty, and that you therefore be careful to scrutinize statements about it in your columns - especially unsubstantiated and opinionated ones from, quite clearly partisan sources such as Mr Grenier - with the greatest rigour.

IAN CALLAGHAN,
36 Aubert Park, London N5 1TU.

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If you have any difficulties concerning your subscription, or if the circulation of the TLS in the United States, please get in touch with Mr. Norman. He is at the New York office of the TLS, 201 East 42nd Street, New York 17, 10017, telephone (212) 986-9336.

Anthologizing Christian Verse

Sir, - J. M. Cameron's review of my anthology (November 27) was thoughtful and generous, and some of his objections I ruefully concede. It is true that John Mason Neale should have been represented by an original translation as well as by an original poem; and I ought not to have overlooked Norman Nicholson. Probably too the Welsh presence should have been strengthened by the inclusion of William Williams. I should like to defend myself against some of his other cavils:

(1) He asks how it is possible. I should have represented C. H. Sisson and Jack Clemo while omitting Yvor Winters and Robert Lowell. My friend the late Yvor Winters was firmly, though I think regretfully, a non-believer, and none of his poems pretend otherwise. Thus I exclude him for just the reason that Cameron finds good in the cases of Emily Brontë and Arthur Hugh Clough, Thomas Hardy and Philip Larkin. As for the late Robert Lowell, also my friend, since I quote very much in my Introduction, Cameron may be sure that my exclusion of him, whether right or wrong, was at all events not unconsidered. The trouble that I have with Lowell's poems on Christian themes is glanced at on page 79 of my *Trying to Explain* (Carcanet).

(2) Cameron contends that my inclusion of H. P. Lyte's "Abide with me" is "a plain breach" of my undertaking to present nothing that is not poetry in a rather exacting sense. I refer him to a spirited and closely argued appreciation of this poem by J. R. Watson in his Durham Inaugural Lecture given last February and now in print.

(3) He finds it "baffling" that I should represent Blake by the one poem, "Jerusalem". But my predecessor Lord David Cecil in 1940 confessed to uncertainty whether Blake's poetry could be called Christian at all; "Jerusalem" is the one poem by him which has been Christianized as it were posthumously, by worshippers who, singing it, give it a meaning that perhaps its author did not intend.

(4) I'm sure Cameron could soon outdo me in knowledge of the theology of the Reformation, but some years ago when I was baptized into the Anglican communion, I was certainly instructed that Holy Matrimony is in a strict sense a sacrament of that Church.

DONALD DAVIE,
Department of English, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235.

Small deviations from the appropriate speed, course and height, and errors in the estimation of wind speed and direction (the latter two, by necessity, having to be guessed when briefing bombing crews) meant enormous errors in strike position.

The "accidental" bombing by the USAAP of the Auschwitz camp was simply a normal bombing error.

D. W. THOMAS,
The Dell, Kiljay, Swansea.

There appears an unfortunate slip in his book on page 128 of a date which he misquotes from my book (*P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master*, Garnstone, 1975). Mr Green mistakes that the short story "At Gelsenheim" was published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1921, whereas it appeared in that publication in 1915. The confusion on Mr Green's part arose because of his neglect to read my Note which appears at the beginning of the Short Story Appendix in which I state that all dates follow the sequence: Year-Month-Day, so that the particular listing for this short story is given as 1915-8-21. This means that it appeared in the 21 August 1915 issue. In the interest of international scholarship,

These much quoted and widely misunderstood words have nothing whatever to do with performance. When they occur in the course of a long letter to Lizzy (September 2, 1852) in which Wagner inveighed against composers like Beethoven and Raff, it is a proposal of Benjamin Collins, and not of Wagner himself, who, instead of forging ahead to create something fresh and genuine, persisted in the hopeless attempt to "galvanize and resuscitate" old opera that had never had any life in them in the first place.

Like Verdi, Richard Strauss and most other operatic creators of whose wishes we are aware, Wagner had very precise and detailed ideas as to how he wanted his works

staged, and expressed them, not only in his copious stage directions, but (again like Verdi) in a stream of "production books" and pamphlets which he pressed on theatrical managements. The notion that his now-famous phrase could conceivably have meant, "Put an irrelevant and disfiguring coat of paint on my perfectly sound and watertight structure", comical enough in itself, becomes doubly absurd when we find him telling Lizzy, in the very same letter, "I have written tolerably comprehensive instructions for the performance of *Tannhäuser*, and have had them printed as a pamphlet and sent a sufficient number of copies to the theatres which have bought the score. I hope this will be of use. I send you herewith half-a-dozen copies." So much for the quaint idea of Wagner as a potential, though posthumous, enthusiast for novel and outlandish perversions of his own carefully planned and meticulously described creations.

DESMOND SHAW-TAYLOR,
15 Furlong Road, London N7.

to the editor

'Hollywood's Vietnam'

Sir, - From Léon Daudet to William Buckley, the extreme right-wing can claim a reasonable complement of droll polemicists. Richard Grenier, the resident film critic of *Commentary* who reviewed my book *Hollywood's Vietnam* (December 4), unfortunately isn't one of them. His facts turn out to be rather more original than his opinions; and even if it was to be expected that, bereft of both ideas and will, he would have recourse to false emphasis and outright distortion, I really can't let his foolish assertions pass without comment.

Shortness of space - obviously not, incidentally, a problem for Richard Grenier, who was permitted by you to fill over two-thirds of a long review with allegations and personal prejudices which were not only unsubstantiated but also irrelevant - forces me to forego any attempt at a comprehensive reply, so I will confine myself to some of the points Grenier makes which do at least touch on the concerns of Adair's book.

Although, in *The Deer Hunter*, the scene of the singing of "God Bless America" may, in that it reflects accurately America's craving after Vietnam for a healing sense of unity, be more than "trumpetry" (as Grenier criticizes Adair for calling it), the film itself must be viewed by any objective critic, on similar grounds of accuracy, as a film about Vietnam (which is the point of view from which Adair was surely looking at it), as not just a piece of "trumpetry" but actually an attempt completely to rewrite history. The film presents its Americans as heroic escapees from apparently inherently and debasedly vicious Asians, while in truth, of course, it was millions of Indo-Chinese who were forced to become escapees from - or, as often as not, mortal or mutilated victims of - the fortunes applied by Americans with so much more devastating lack of discrimination. Since *The Deer Hunter* does not offer even a hint of the massive destruction wrought by Americans in Vietnam, it surely deserves, as it would be accorded by any critic who wished to see the truth rather than convenient and apologist lies recorded on the screen, the "black marks" awarded it by Adair. A concern for at least minimal standards of accuracy is also presumably the reason why *Apocalypse Now*, which does at least admit the destructiveness of the American military machine in Vietnam, is more to Adair's "liking" as Richard Grenier so condescendingly puts it - though *Apocalypse Now*, too, is a deeply propagandist film, attempting to persuade its viewers, by showing the regular US Army purging its "unusual" (irregular) forces, that the official American intervention in Vietnam was in no way criminal or immoral.

As for the rest of Richard Grenier's review, may I suggest to you that you bear in mind that Vietnam is still too close for even the most detached historians to contemplate as a subject with any objective certainty, and that you therefore be careful to scrutinize statements about it in your columns - especially unsubstantiated and opinionated ones from, quite clearly partisan sources such as Mr Grenier - with the greatest rigour.

IAN CALLAGHAN,
36 Aubert Park, London N5 1TU.

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If you have any difficulties concerning your subscription, or if the circulation of the TLS in the United States, please get in touch with Mr. Norman. He is at the New York office of the TLS, 201 East 42nd Street, New York 17, 10017, telephone (212) 986-9336.

In his concluding paragraph he

Andrei Voznesensky

Sir, - I find it very odd that Michael Horowitz (Letters, November 11) chooses to interpret my gentle irony at the expense of the (largely) British audience at Voznesensky's Round House poetry reading - an audience in which I naturally include myself - as xenophobic. He is perfectly justified however in taking me to task for my misquotation from "Chagall's Cornflakes". The phrase in question is, of course, "Man lives by sky alone" and not the negative version which I inadvertently wrote, for which carelessness I apologize. This nevertheless does not affect the substance of my criticism, which was that Voznesensky's repetition of the phrase is tedious. The sentiment has a cheap theatricality which suggests that Voznesensky tends, even when making a genuine protest, to say the kind of thing that poets are always expected to say, and it is perhaps for this reason that he is allowed, if under duress, to go on saying it.

I do not know what grounds Horowitz has for saying that I am more "inward" with Brodsky than Voznesensky. One can only perhaps truly "inward" with poets of one's own tongue. But that is no reason not to respond as critically and imaginatively as possible to translations when they are presented as "poems". Certainly Voznesensky is a more engaging performer than Brodsky, but in my review I was considering, at that point, Voz

A fist where a face should be

By Peter Lewis

ALAN BURNS:
The Day Daddy Died
138pp. Allison & Busby. £6.95.
(Paperback, £2.95).
0 85031 381 3

In the aggressive testament verging on an artistic manifesto which he published in 1970, Alan Burns launched a blitzkrieg on orthodox fiction, arguing that the novel was the only art form that had stood still for fifty years. In its mainstream form, the novel was an anachronism, and as a relic of bygone rationalism and liberalism was utterly irrelevant to the chaotic and fragmented world of the present. Only a radically new form of fiction, presumably of the anarchic kind Burns himself had been writing, could hope to interpret contemporary life. Such Continental and American-inspired views were common enough towards the end of the "swinging" decade, and were a refreshing response to the cultural conservatism of the post-war period. Had they produced a few major literary achievements in England which could not be ignored, they would not be so easily derided as they are now that conservatism has reasserted itself so comprehensively.

Like B. S. Johnson, with whom he is often linked, Burns acquired his reputation as an innovative novelist or anti-novelist during the 1960s, when he published his first four books. Charles Marowitz's production of his topical play *Palnack* at the Open Space in 1970 confirmed Burns' status as one of the most interesting writers to have emerged during the previous decade, but not long after, Robert Nye suggested that with *Abel* (1959) Burns and his "burnt-out" style had reached a dead end: having exhausted the possibilities of one idiom, Burns would have to change course. Burns has certainly been much less productive as an imaginative writer since those heady days, although he has published two non-fiction books: *The Day Daddy Died* is his first, novel *Since The Angry Brigade*, nearly seven years ago.

What gives his new novel the immediate appearance of an experimental work is the inclusion of eighteen photo-collages by Ian Breakwell, interspersed throughout the text. These are neither illustrations in the usual sense, nor integral elements of the novel; rather, they form a parallel sequence of images which derive from the novel but do not really add anything to it. The visual material may need the text, but the text does not need the photo-collages. The principal effect of these, with their surreal juxtapositions, is to give an overall impression of a type of artistic adventurousness to which the novel itself does not aspire.

The opening picture, a portrait with a fist where a face should be, may prompt formal dislocation and linguistic fireworks, but the fast-moving narrative proves to be straightforward and chronological, while the idiom, though varied, is for the most part simple and lucid. Even so, the novel is far from orthodox, since Burns is not writing in the mainstream tradition of psychological fiction, but going back to the roots of the genre in episodic, picaresque narratives. It is Defoe, whom *The Day Daddy Died* brings to mind, and Norah, Burns's working-class heroine (the word is not inappropriate), recalls Defoe's most famous female survivor, Moll Flanders. What is most striking about the style is the deliberately jarring effect Burns produces by periodically changing gear for a short time from direct exposition to a more allusive, indirect, and evocative mode.

Although short, even by contemporary standards, Burns's novel charts Norah's life over about forty years, from childhood in the 1930s to the present day. To achieve this, Burns has to be highly selective and almost inevitably omits much of what he might have wanted to say. The novel is a masterpiece of compression, and a testament to the power of the novel to pass

glimpse children, all fathered by different men. Like Defoe, Burns is concerned mainly with outward events, with actions and their consequences, rather than with interior processes. Norah goes through men (only one of whom she marries) much as Moll Flanders goes through husbands, but for all her varied sexual experience Norah retains a kind of innocence and integrity. In her relationships, she is the one to be taken advantage of, but she bears no grudges, accepting her unplanned pregnancies as part of her purpose in life. Her devotion to her large family is absolute, and is associated with her love for her father, who died when she was entering adolescence. Her relationship with her father's memory is probably the most stable one she has.

Again like Moll Flanders, Norah has a wonderful ability to survive in

a hostile world. Her life as a single parent is full of extreme hardship, privation, and suffering. She is never crushed, even when most of the children are taken away from her for a time because of what is interpreted as her failure and inadequacy as a mother, or when her eldest, self-destructive boy, Terry, eventually succeeds in committing suicide. Norah's formidable resilience enables her to keep looking forward to the future with hope instead of back with regret and despair. Significantly, the novel ends on a strong upbeat with Norah riding high.

Implicit in Burns's celebration of this individualistic, earth-mother figure are two very different forms of criticism, one social, the other literary. Konrad Adenauer once said, "The Welfare State is the end of welfare," and today the Welfare State is under strong attack from

both Right and Left. Norah's non-conformism and independence make her a natural victim of the authoritarian and bureaucratic Welfare State, and Burns's novel is in some ways an indictment of a nominally democratic society which congratulates itself on being "caring" while it is actually destructive of human happiness and of human beings themselves. Burns's anarchic zeal glows beneath the surface.

At the literary level, Burns's novel about a disadvantaged woman who really does have something to moan about but does not do so, contains an implied attack on a staple of contemporary fiction, replete with middle-class neuroses, privileges, and pains, and characters with plenty of time to enjoy their frequently self-inflicted anguish. A luxury Norah cannot afford. Although on the surface *The Day Daddy Died* appears to

be markedly different from Burns's self-consciously experimental fiction of the 1960s, a strong subversive current is felt throughout. Burns has found a way of accommodating his anarchic vision within a framework more appropriate to the 1980s than the absurdist paradigms of his early books.

Six Novelists Look at Society, "An Enquiry into the Social Views of Elizabeth Bowen, L. P. Hartley, Rosamund Lehman, Christopher Isherwood, Nancy Mitford and C. P. Snow" by John Atkins, has just been reissued in paperback (284pp. John Calder, £3.95, 0 7145 3863 9). The publishers comment that the book is "both a study of changes that have taken place in English society during the crucial half century from 1920 to 1970, and the effect of such changes on the writers in question".

The freedom from possessions

By Savkar Altinel

B. TRAVEN:
The Carreta
264pp. Allison & Busby £6.95.
(Paperback, £2.95).
0 85031 392 9

Writers who try to avoid the limelight normally end up by achieving notoriety for that very reason. Until relatively recently, however, little was known in this country about B. Traven and his lifelong obsession with secrecy. Then came a special edition of *The Book Programme*, followed by a well-researched book by the programme's producer, Will Wyatt, entitled *The Man Who Was B. Traven*; people who had never heard of this elusive figure before were not only introduced to the mystery surrounding him but also offered the solution. Now it is common knowledge that Traven lived in Mexico, used a post-office box number when writing to his various publishers, never answered any enquiry concerning himself, successfully evaded all those who went in search of him, and died, leaving behind him a riddle. The answer to this was found by Wyatt and his researchers, who were able to identify him as one Otto Wenecke, who had had an earlier career as an actor and anarchist in Germany under the name of "Ret Marut" before leaving Europe for good in the early 1920s to start a new life as a novelist on the other side of the Atlantic.

More importantly, Traven, who never lacked admirers anywhere else in the world, at last has a following in Britain as well, and most of his major works are back in print. This is a most welcome development, for in many ways he is a remarkable writer. Although his main subject matter – the exploitation of the Mexican poor by foreign investors and big landowners – is hardly original, he handles it with considerable grace and subtlety. While most writers who deal with developing countries feel obliged to come up with prolonged descriptions of suffering and trades against tyranny, Traven uses a mixture of humour and irony that is ultimately much more devastating in its effects. In his books suffering is never allowed to blot out life altogether. Indeed, free from possession and any anxiety about them, the poor enjoy a curious vitality, whereas the empty-minded bourgeois appears as a pitiful creature shut out from life by the barriers he erects around himself to protect his wealth. In a splendid scene in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, for instance, a group of naked men bathing in a stream while white ladies can only nervously survey the same spectacle through opera glasses from their villas in the distance.

Furthermore, by showing the bourgeois to be essentially lifeless and stupid, Traven manages to make his power, a species doomed to pass

away as soon as a particular phase of social evolution is over. His work is full of the kind of hope that noisier writers fail to offer.

The Carreta is the second of Traven's six so-called "Jungle Novels", dealing with the Mexican revolution of 1910, which are now being reissued; it has all the characteristics Traven touches. A twelve-year-old peon named Andres Ugale is sent by his landlord to work in a nearby town where his new master loses him in a game of cards to a haulage contractor. The boy thus has to learn to drive a carreta, or ox-cart, and eventually becomes an encargado, a kind of caravan leader in charge of an entire train of carretas. Traven is interested, however, not so much in telling a specific story as conveying the general misery of pre-revolutionary Mexico, and this he does admirably.

The book is organized round the

institution of debt slavery. Whatever a peasant or worker needs has to be obtained from his master, who lets him have it on credit at four or five times its real value provided that he agrees to receive no wages until the debt is discharged. But before he can pay off one debt a man usually incurs others, and he can never be free. If he tries to run away he is caught and brought back, and the cost of tracking him down is added to the sum he already owes. Moreover, there is always the danger that after a certain point he may be sold to one of the firms in the mahogany trade and worked to death. It is an inhuman system, yet Traven never lets us forget that it is run by perfectly ordinary human beings. The masters come across as common oafs corrupted by a mindless devotion to money.

In the same realistic, matter-of-fact manner, the poor are shown

adapting and surviving, and even retaining a measure of dignity. At one point Traven describes a man dancing with a girl at a fiesta with a bundle in his hand because there is nowhere to leave it.

He held it while they danced. It looked foolish, although none of the other dancers cared whether a man danced with a bundle in his hand or a box under his arm, and if anyone had given the matter a thought he would have said to himself that someone who danced with a bundle in his hand must have a good reason for it, since he wouldn't do it from choice.

That, we are meant to realize, is the way it is. A man will dance with a bundle in his hand or a box under his arm; similarly he will suffer all kinds of indignities and still remain a man. This is a funny, sad and deeply compassionate novel that is bound to add to the strength of the Traven revival.

Predators and their prey

By Robin Buss

MICHEL DEL CASTILLO:
La nuit du Décret
326pp. Paris: Seuil.

The epigraph of Michel del Castillo's novel is from *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Each of us is guilty of everything towards everyone." This is slightly ungenerous in a work which, in technique, owes more than a passing debt to the whodunnit, a genre based on very different assumptions, but it is an apt summary of del Castillo's theme. There is an investigation, conducted by the narrator, not into a crime but into the character of his boss, police inspector Avellino Pared. Since this is Spain, towards the end of the Franco era, the enquiry reveals some sinister aspects of both the exercise of power and the police mentality, but its primary fascination lies in the gradual positioning of the elements of a jigsaw puzzle and, as with the best detective novels, in the personal conflict between the investigator and his prey. However, as the epigraph from Dostoevsky forewarns us, the lines between villain and inquirer are not clearly drawn.

It is difficult to say more without giving away the secrets of a well-managed plot. Pared is the ultimate predator, dedicated to the concept of order, tireless in the pursuit of his intelligence needed to maintain it. If his personality seems at times exaggerated, even melodramatic, it is because he obeys a force of nature that tends to the reduction of anomalies and to the establishment of a stable norm. When he detects weakness, he exploits it; mercilessly, tenderly encouraging his wife's greed until she is immobilized by obesity; defeating an anarchist intellectual

with his own logic. It might be hard to accept this stage villain if he did not remain offstage for much of the book and operate indirectly through his effects on the narrator, Laredo. Indeed, the moral crux of the story is the betrayal by Laredo of the homosexual school-teacher, an incident from his adolescence which he comes to understand only when he sees it in the context of Pared's personality and career.

Though *La nuit du Décret*, which won this year's Prix Renaudot, can hardly be read as a tribute to the police in Spain or elsewhere, its

repugnance is directed against *les forces de l'ordre* in a more general sense. Pared emerges finally as the counterpart to Jonas Erda, hero of Didier Decoin's novel *Un policeman*, who (reflecting perhaps the shining reputation of the English hobby) set out to right a trivial wrong in obedience to a divine ideal of justice. Del Castillo's inspector, coming from a Catholic country where they have never confused the functions of the secular and the religious arm, is a servant of the old law which cannot allow for the vagaries of a Redeemer: "Tout ce que la police abhorre, cet illuminé l'incarne: l'errance, la subversion, l'esprit d'indécision".

Descending scale

By Colin Russ

GABRIELE WOHMANN:
Das Glücksspiel
234pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand.

Lilly Steiner, a piano teacher, has to cope with a world made up of the second-hand and the second-rate. She lives with her stepson and (not entirely plausibly) somebody else's elderly uncle, reads the German equivalent of a Sunday supplement with "dismalizing" enthusiasm, embarks on an affair which gives her more to observe than to enjoy, and as a theatrical set. Motifs of physical frailty and inadequacy recur throughout and underline the sense of damnation. Language, too, is damaged, by the use of cliché, including the abbreviated form of her name which Lilly (Elizabeth) seeks to re-

nounce. Eventually, impulses both murderous and suicidal surface; and destroy her bizarre household. The book ends with Lilly in an unbalanced state and being taken into police custody.

It is tempting to see Lilly's fate as illustrating the predicament of a woman denied compassion and understanding in a man's world. Yet Gabriele Wohmann is not a feminist writer. Claudia, the determinedly emancipated character in Lilly's circle, is viewed with scorn: she is the worst cliché of all. As usual, the author offers no easy solutions to the problems that she raises. In particular, her domestic interiors remain characteristically unconvincing. Any small victories scored by her figures, adrift in a loveless world, remain precarious and provisional. Compassion is reserved for the reader; lying as it does in the sardonic humour and deft imagery with which Wohmann seasons, or to be precise, seasons, her narrative.

The Irony and the Pity

By Samuel Hynes

PETER VANSITTART:
Voices from the Great War

303pp. Cape. £7.95.
0 224 01915 5

CATHERINE W. REILLY (Editor):
Sears Upon my Heart
Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War
144pp. Virago. £3.75.
0 86068 226 9

JON SILKIN (Editor):
The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry
Second Edition
282pp. Penguin. £1.75.
0 14 042 255 2

Sixty years after the Armistice, and separated from us now by one greater war and many lesser ones, the First World War nevertheless remains the Western world's favourite: still written about, anthologized, and re-enacted on our television screens. Since it is commonly agreed to have been the stupidest and most wastefully destructive of human conflicts, one might consider that there was something a bit paradoxical in this continuing popularity.

But of course there is no real paradox here: we like to be reminded of that war because, of all wars, it most unambiguously confirms the ideas that most of us have of the nature of war itself. All wars are stupid and wasteful, but the Great War made that point with exceptional clarity – mainly, I think, because it went on and on in the same place. In a mobile war the armies move on from their dead and can forget them; but in the stationary war on the Western Front the living stayed with the dead, walked over them in the trenches, watched them decompose on the wire, and so were daily reminded of the enormity of their losses and the insignificance of their gains. We inherit their images, and the point they make: that in such a situation war is reduced to its fundamental truth – men killing each other.

The Great War was also the last large-scale war to which men brought idealistic notions of war itself: that it embodied; that it gave healthy exercise to lethargic, peaceable nations; that it was the highest exercise of virility – all that "swimmers into cleanliness brooking" stuff that so excited Rupert Brooke. The actual fighting seemed to destroy all that, to prove once and for all the folly of idealism – not only that idealism, but any idealism. Ideals were a trivial played by the old on the young: "If any question why we died / Tell them – because our fathers lied" wrote Kipling, whose son was killed in France. And surely one reason that we return to the War is the satisfaction that its ignorant ironies give us; to think that men once went to war for those beliefs, and found that reality! (The Second World War, our war, was by comparison an ideal-less affair, no more than a task to be done.)

It has become customary to call a personal conception of history a myth, and in this sense most of us have a myth of the Great War, composed of our readings (novels and boys' years; his image of that war took shape how it acquired characters like the Kaiser, Ludendorff, Captain Boy Ed, and a language (*Bosche*, *Minnie Weifers*, *Brass Hat*), and common currency of remembered anecdotes and attitudes (every Englishman and every American of my generation can sing *Tipperary* and *Mademoiselle from Armentières*). In general terms the myth is much the same for all of us: it was a "war to end wars", planned by the Old Man (capitalized) and fought by the young; in a generation was destroyed, empires fell and monarchs died; but in the end nothing was really gained, nobody won, and war didn't end. What began as a Grand Illusion ended as a Great Disillusionment.

Students of modern literary history have another myth of the war; as a

major literary event with important consequences for modern writing. One of the crucial documents in this bit of myth-making is the Preface that Wilfred Owen drafted for his first book of poems: indeed you could argue that that unfinished preface is more important to the history of modernism than any of his poems. "My subject is War, and the pity of War", Owen wrote. "The Poetry is in the pity." And ironic pity became a commonplace modernist attitude, almost a cliché ("Irony and Pity", the Donald Ogden Stewart character in *Fiesta* sings. "When you're feeling... Oh Give them Irony and Give them Pity.")

Owen also excluded certain themes – and the words that name them – as inappropriate to a correct pity. "This book is not about peroceros. Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War." This statement

represents and interprets its subject. The pieces are small (few longer than a page, some only a line or two) and very many. Quotations from some of the best-known writers of the war – Owen, Sassoon, Barbusse, Blunden, Hemingway, Rosenberg, Gurney – mix with soldiers' songs and sayings, newspaper headlines, personal letters, and public proclamations.

The organization of the book is chronological, and passages are carefully dated to keep the reader lost in time. But the book isn't history, in the customary sense: it does not interpret, or construct patterns of cause and effect; it simply drops piece after piece into place. The initial impression it gives is of a remote, ironic detachment, as though the book had been put together by Hardy's Ironic Spirits. The war moves through its time, its details deliberately discontinuous and apparently random, composing in its

to the credit of the women. In her introduction Miss Reilly complains that the contribution of women has been largely ignored in modern anthologies of First World War poetry, and indeed she is quite right (Jon Silkin, for example, includes work by two Russian women in his *Penguin Book*, but none by English women). But her own selections make the reason obvious and overwhelming: these women simply weren't very good poets, at least not in their war-poems. Most of the women of the war generation who had or made literary reputations are represented here: Amy Lowell, Charlotte Mew, Alice Meynell, Harriet Monroe, Edith Sitwell, Sara Teasdale, Katherine Tynan among the poets, as well as prose-writers Margaret Cole, Rose Macaulay, May Sinclair, Marie Stopes and Mary Webb. But none of them is represented by really memorable verse. It is hard to imagine any single poem in this collection finding its way into a general anthology of twentieth-century poetry.

Obviously, then, this is not an anthology to be judged, or even read, for its literary merit. But there are other good reasons for reading these poems: they tell us what these women were thinking in wartime – about war, and also about poetry, or to put it another way, about what subjects and what forms they thought appropriate for poetry then. For the most part they follow Owen's interdictions: there are not many poems about deeds, lands, glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, nor do these forbidden words occur often. Their subjects are rather personal loss, loneliness, suffering, and most of all endurance – the chief virtue of the passive and helpless. Some are bitter, some ironic, some as angry as Sassoon. Many try to make the desperate best of death, writing about immortality and the deathless heart.

Many – I'd say most – of the poets accept the war as morally right and necessary. This is not surprising: most English women of those years would have felt so. Even the Vera Brittain poem that gives the collection its title is essentially pro-war:

To My Brother
Your battle-wounds are scars upon my heart,
Received when in that grand and tragic show
You played your part
Two years ago,

And silver in the summer morning
I see the symbol of your courage glow –

That Cross you won
Two years ago.

Though now again you watch the shrapnel fly,
And here the guns that daily louder grow,

As in July
Two years ago,

May you endure to lead the Last Advance

And with you triumph purple the flying foe

As once in France
Two years ago.

This poem, with its mixture of hero-worship and marital excitement, is fairly representative of the collection: it is personal, and no doubt it was deeply felt, but it simply confirms the general truth that most poems are made, not out of experience but out of other poetry – out of "poetic" emotions, and poetic language, and traditional poetic forms. The most interesting poems here, in fact, are the least poetic – the formless personal statements that reach for honest descriptions of experience, and never mind the poetry: a nursing scene at Rouen, night duty in a hospital ward, a "Jingo Woman" – a wartime picnic, an epilogue at the Cenotaph. Such poems add feelings to the social history of the time, and I'm glad to have them available.

Though Catherine Reilly shares with Vansittart (and the rest of us) the liberal myth of the war ("a gross

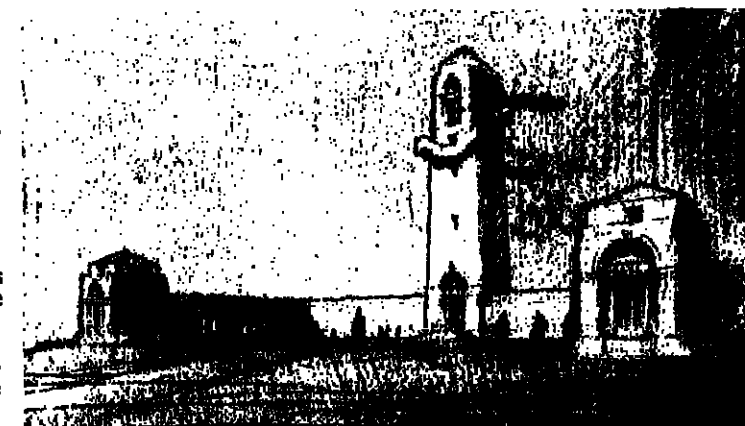
folly and an immense agony", she calls it in her introduction), her book is not polemical. There is, however, an aggressive polemical thrust to the preface that Judith Kazantzis contributes. What Mrs Kazantzis argues is that these poems are feminist, anti-war, and "anti-macho". But what she really says, when she lowers her voice to describe the poems, is that they are just what one might expect of ordinary patriotic, religious, romantic, domestic middle-class women of their time, faced with a war that seemed both to demand those values of women, and to annihilate them: that is, that the poems are troubled, confused, and sometimes contradictory, as the world seemed to be. The descriptive account, here, is a good deal more interesting than the polemical over-ly.

Still, one can understand the polemical impulse: how can you be neutral or objective about war or about the poetry that has come out of it? Should not even the anthologist assume a moral posture? Jon Silkin's *Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, which has recently been reissued in a second, expanded edition, is a striking demonstration of this problem. Silkin's views on war become quite clear in the course of his long introduction to the book. (Also his views on Homer, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, F. R. Leavis, John H. Johnson and Domènec J. B. – has there ever been another Penguin anthology that carried a sixty-page introduction to less than 200 pages of text?) From these views Silkin argues an aesthetic that will enable him to judge poets by their attitudes toward war: "I believe," he says, "it's possible to evaluate the war poets for their explicit ideas." And he proceeds, at considerable length, to do so. The consequence, essentially, is that the attitudes embodied in the liberal myth of war become standards of literary judgment. Those poems that speak against this polemical posture are identified in the introduction as poems that "caught, and held, the sense of an ethos", but are not good poems; and, lest the unwary reader should admire them, they are marked in the text with an asterisk.

Silkin specifically rejects the idea of making a "historical" anthology; his, he says, has tried to limit itself to excellence. But what does excellence mean here? An excellent view of war, apparently. Most of the poems that Silkin has chosen are the ones that most of us would choose: the canon of Great War poets is pretty well established by now. The only surprises are a poem by Lawrence that has nothing to do with the war, and a poem by Herbert Read written in 1923. But Silkin has restricted the range of attitude and tone within that canon, in order to reinforce once more the liberal myth that we all share.

There are two points at issue here. First, the judgment of poetry in terms of its explicit ideas: there is a kind of content control in this that I find unattractive and a bit sinister. And second, the question of the historical responsibility of the anthologist. A book of poems of the First World War is inevitably historical; there can be no question about that. And if historical, should it not represent? Should it not include Grenfell without the "condemning asterisk"? And perhaps Sassoon's "Absolution"? And Guinness's "To the Post Before Battle"? How, with only this anthology to guide him, will a reader ever get behind the myth; to the war?

Miss Reilly, in her modest way, comes closest to meeting history honestly. Vansittart also tries to be scrupulous (he gives Julian Grenfell a more decent representation than Silkin does), and if his own view is always clear, that, after all, is his subject. But Silkin rejects history, and redefines excellence to suit his own polemical wishes, and though the selection that results is a book of good poems, it is not, I think, a good anthology.



This perspective sketch by Lucien for his design for the Australian National War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Cemetery in the Somme is included in the exhibition of his work at the Hayward Gallery (until January 31, 1982) which was reviewed in the TLS on November 27.

sets limits to modernist, post-war fiction; ten years later Hemingway schooled it to in a battlefield meditation in *A Farewell to Arms*: "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice and the expression in vain. . . . Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage, or hallow were obscene, beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates."

What Owen was asserting in his Preface was that war had made a modernist style necessary. Not that modernism began with the Great War; but that it was made inevitable there – that it was what was left when the lies of the Old Man had been demolished. Hemingway started from essentially the same place, and so did most other post-war modernists, from Eliot to Michael Arden. And we inherit their myth: that the Great War validated irony, and invalidated abstractions.

If the Great War is so important, both to our anti-war myth of war and to our myths of modernism, it isn't surprising that contemporary writers should continue to be drawn to it, and to feel a need to re-create it – yet again. Peter Vansittart, for example, is a man of the Second World War, who came of age in 1941; yet it is the First War that has engaged his imagination. In his introduction to *Voices from the Great War* he describes how, in his school years, his image of that war took shape: how it acquired characters like the Kaiser, Ludendorff, Captain Boy Ed, and a language (*Bosche*, *Minnie Weifers*, *Brass Hat*), and common currency of remembered anecdotes and attitudes (every Englishman and every American of my generation can sing *Tipperary* and *Mademoiselle from Armentières*). In general terms the myth is much the same for all of us: it was a "war to end wars", planned by the Old Man (capitalized) and fought by the young; in a generation was destroyed, empires fell and monarchs died; but in the end nothing was really gained, nobody won, and war didn't end. What began as a Grand Illusion ended as a Great Disillusionment.

Voices is a representation of that personal myth, reconstructed out of the miscellaneous facts and fictions that constitute it. In Vansittart's mind. He calls his book an anthology, but it isn't really that: it's a representative of anything except the compiler's sense of what the Great War was like, and what it meant. It would be more precise, I think, to call it a collage – an image composed of bits and pieces, which collectively

represents and interprets its subject. The pieces are small (few longer than a page, some only a line or two) and very many. Quotations from some of the best-known writers of the war – Owen, Sassoon, Barbusse, Blunden, Hemingway, Rosenberg, Gurney – mix with soldiers' songs and sayings, newspaper headlines, personal letters, and public proclamations.

The organization of the book is chronological, and passages are carefully dated to keep the reader lost in time. But the book isn't history, in the customary sense: it does not interpret, or construct patterns of cause and effect; it simply drops piece after piece into place. The initial impression it gives is of a remote, ironic detachment, as though the book had been put together by Hardy's Ironic Spirits. The war moves through its time, its details deliberately discontinuous and apparently random, composing in its

In search of the Superman

By Filippo Donini

EZIO RAIMONDI:
Il Silenzio della Gorgone
181pp. Bologna: Zanichelli. L. 6,400.

VITTORIO VETTORI:
D'Annunzio e il mito del Superuomo
286pp. Castello di Borgo alla Collina
(Arezzo): Accademia Casentinese
L. 15,000.

D'ANNUNZIO/CIANO:
Carteggio lucido
Gardone (Brescia): Quaderni del
Vittoriale. L. 3,000.

The lowest point of D'Annunzio's fame and popularity was reached immediately after the Second World War, when the collapse of Fascism led to a detestation of the man who was considered, not without foundation, as having been responsible for starting the political movement which ruined Italy. The poet seemed to have been buried along with his nationalism, and the cult of D'Annunzio remained for a long time the preserve of the small neo-Fascist party.

But in the 1960s things began to change. D'Annunzio's critical attitude towards Mussolini, and his lukewarm and superficial acceptance of a triumphant Fascism, were studied more closely by historians, and the permanent value of his poetry - the modernity of its intimate core, its tremendous influence on all subsequent Italian poets of this century - has been the object of accurate and penetrating research. Although some critics persist in maintaining, with Edoardo Sanguineti, that whatever positive has been achieved in Italian literature in the course of this century derives from a reaction to D'Annunzio, Montale's balanced judgment is more widely accepted: D'Annunzio's influence is present in all subsequent Italian poets because he attempted all the stylistic and metrical possibilities of our time, and not to have learnt anything from him would be a very bad sign.

The main landmarks in the process of D'Annunzio's recovery of favour in Italy were the appearance in 1960 of E. De Michelis's *Tutto D'Annunzio*, a collection of essays produced to mark the centenary of his birth in 1963, E. Raimondi's admirable chap-

ter in Cecchi and Sapegno's *History of Italian Literature* (1969), Renzo De Felice's studies on the correspondence between D'Annunzio and Mussolini (1971) and on D'Annunzio's political (1979), F. Roncoroni's excellent commentary in the Garzanti anthology of D'Annunzio's poems (1978), and Piero Chiara's accurate but fundamentally hostile biography of the poet (also 1978), which provoked many useful debates.

In recent years the Fondazione del Vittoriale, an institution whose purpose is to preserve D'Annunzio's last home (which the poet himself called "Il Vittoriale" in memory of the Italian victory over Austria in 1918) and to promote knowledge of his works, has been active in many ways, publishing a bulletin which has often featured first-rate studies, arranging successful exhibitions at its premises by Lake Garda and convening several national and international conferences. Other meetings have taken place at Pescara, where the poet was born, and of these the one held in 1979 on "The Young D'Annunzio and *Verismo*" and this year's conference on D'Annunzio's *Trionfo della morte* have been the most memorable; some hitherto unknown poems by the prodigious youth have also been published: *Rime inedite e stravaganti* di Gabriele D'Annunzio edited by Raffaele Tiboni, Pescara, 1981).

The interest among critics and scholars is paralleled by an increased curiosity among the general public. Visconti's film of *L'innocente* (1976) probably encouraged many people to read D'Annunzio's novels again, or for the first time, and Mondadori were prompt to republish them. Some of his plays have been performed: even his mediocre *Parolina* has been resurrected, with the music of Mascagni, and new performances of *Sogno di un tramonto d'autunno* are announced for Milan, and of *La figlia di Jorio* at Prato. Streams of visitors flock to the Vittoriale, attracted no doubt by a prurient exhibition of objects connected with the poet's intimate life (his bed, his nightgowns, even his bath and bidet) but also by the political overtones of much of the *décor* and the mottoes. The inscription which Mussolini had to read on his famous visit: "Remember that you are made of glass

and I of steel", regularly keeps the crowds awake.

It is curious that the memory of the author of *Lais* verse, whose best pages, both in prose and in verse, express a magnificent, vigorous glorification of life, should have been petrified, at the Vittoriale, into a sort of funeral temple. But the correspondence between D'Annunzio and his architect, Gian Carlo Maroni, which was published in the Foundation's bulletin in 1979, shows beyond doubt how gloomy and despondent the former Superman and Superlover was in his last years, when days of futile pursuit were followed by desolate nights in loneliness or mercenary debauch. So that if the architect gave the Vittoriale its predominant aspect of triumphal sepulchre, he certainly did not traduce his master's intentions.

To separate the enduring from the transitory in D'Annunzio's work, that is to extricate from the bulk of his farraginous production the "intimate core" of his highest inspiration, has always been the purpose of his most penetrating critics. From Croce, Borgese and Gargiulo in the early decades of this century to the protagonists of the current reevaluation, there has been a persistent effort to divest the poet of his many disguises in order to reveal his genuine self. Ezio Raimondi's essay, to which I have already referred, marked a great step forward in this respect and was generally hailed as a new and very convincing interpretation of D'Annunzio's work. It is now reprinted and completed with an introduction on "D'Annunzio, Serra e il Novecento" and a new chapter on the relations between D'Annunzio and symbolism.

Raimondi accepts Croce's definition of D'Annunzio as a "dilettante di sensazioni", but without the disparaging implications which qualified Croce's basically correct verdict. Transforming the joy of the senses into poetry is something that only a true magician like D'Annunzio could achieve, and Raimondi has some very illuminating passages on the "transfiguration" of reality which occurs in the best poems of *Alcyon* (especially in "Meriggio"). Raimondi's ear is also very alert to D'Annunzio's music, and this too is a great comfort after years of

fashionable revulsion among Italian critics from both rhythm and rhyme. Appropriately, he quotes Yeats on the value of rhythm in prolonging "the moment of contemplation". Incidentally, Raimondi is among the least provincial of Italian critics: it is a pleasure to find how familiar he is with Henry James, Edmund Wilson and Frank Kermode, to whose critical insights he turns for a better understanding of certain aspects of D'Annunzio.

The title of Vittorio Vettori's book is misleading, because it seems to indicate that its subject is the influence of Nietzsche on D'Annunzio, whereas in fact the book consists of two separate sections, one on the German philosopher and the other on the Italian poet, without any real connection between them. A diligent review of the development and success of Nietzsche's doctrine is followed by a rather sketchy examination of D'Annunzio's work and its fortune; an appendix reprints articles by Panzini, Plovene, Carriari and Bargellini, a chapter from a book by G. Volpe, and four brief essays, this time by Vettori himself, on the relations between D'Annunzio and Proust, Drieu La Rochelle, Mauriac and De Chirico: all this is very interesting, but has nothing to do with the theme announced by the title.

D'Annunzio was to some extent predestined to become addicted to the Nietzschean drug: even in his teens he was a sort of provincial mini-Superman. The discovery of Zarathustra only served to crystallize tendencies already present in him. Whether this was to the advantage of his art is debatable and in fact the recent Pescara Conference on *Trionfo della morte* mostly concerned itself with this very problem. Vettori does not even mention it, although his admiration for D'Annunzio's military and political activity implies an appreciation of the "superhuman" side of the poet which contrasts sharply with Raimondi's preference for the "undisguised" D'Annunzio.

One of the "soldier-poet's" most celebrated exploits is the principal subject of the correspondence between D'Annunzio and Costanzo Ciano (the father of Mussolini's Foreign Secretary and son-in-law) which has now been published by the

Vittoriale Foundation. It ranges from 1918, when D'Annunzio participated in Ciano's raid on the Austrian port of Buccari where some enemy ships were torpedoed, practically to the eve of the poet's death. It conveys, as might be expected, much rhetoric, all glorification of this daring but not very effective exploit (no battleship was sunk), relieved here and there by sparks of a poetical imagination on the decline. What is more relevant is the confirmation contained in these letters to a high Fascist leader, of D'Annunzio's impatience with both Mussolini and Fascism. "I cannot breathe, in this stink of human consciences" (an allusion to the Duce's growing popularity, in 1924): "I offered to the Head of the Government my active friendship," he rejects it, alas, without elegance, "I shall celebrate the first of April as the true National Day of the new Italy". It has often been said that D'Annunzio had no sense of humour: but this last quotation is credible. Even more credible is another, inspired by the appointment of Ciano to be Postmaster-General: "You now become my colleague also as a man of letters."

Another little-known aspect of D'Annunzio's personality that shows through in this correspondence is his human side. Many of his humble followers of earlier times - the soldiers who had met him in the trenches, the volunteers whom he had led to the occupation of Fiume - turned to him in his age of retirement, seeking his powerful protection in order to obtain a job, a promotion, a pension. They regularly addressed him as *Comandante* (commander), the naval title that he liked and by which he was usually described after the war. Well, the *Comandante* always took great pains to satisfy the petitioners. Not that the term *Comandante* means much nowadays. When the excellent actress, Piersa D'Agostini, was congratulated by interpreting the title role in *La figlia di Jorio*, and was told: "The *Comandante* would have liked your performance," she replied: "Ah, and who did he not come?" She would not have made that gaffe if D'Annunzio had been described as "the poet". The *Comandante* is dead, but the poet lives.

accept the writer's own view of his new moral purpose. Typically, Glipius sees the goal which Gogol had now set himself as essentially literary.

Gogol had been proclaimed the head of a rising "Natural School", with which in reality he had little to do. "Belinsky could hardly have suspected how apt was the metaphor that made Gogol the Columbus of naturalism. In fact Gogol, like Columbus, did discover a land he had not counted on finding." Glipius interprets Gogol's constant requests for facts and statistics about Russia in the last period of his life as a belated attempt to assume a mantle he was thought to be already wearing. The idea has much to commend it, but it is not the full truth. It leaves out of account, tyranny of the spiritual which dominated all aesthetic considerations during his last years.

Maguire has made a workmanlike job of translating the Russian text, which at times he has had to adapt and expand. He has added his own fuller notes to those of Glipius, providing a scholarly commentary which corrects many of the errors in the original text, and although Gogol's scholarship has moved on since 1924, Maguire has retained the temptation to update "Glipius's" work. The appearance of this scholarly translation of a critical classic can only be welcomed by all those interested in Russian literature and in one of the greatest, and most enigmatic, of its geniuses.

Bias towards the literary springs of Gogol's art leads Glipius to an original interpretation of the writer's intentions for the second part of *Dead Souls*. He is prepared to believe Gogol's "explanation" that the second burning of the manuscript was a mistake, but less inclined to

DAVID FRISBY:
Sociological Impressionism
A Reassessment of Georg Simmel's Social Theory
190pp. Heinemann. £16.
0 435 82320 5

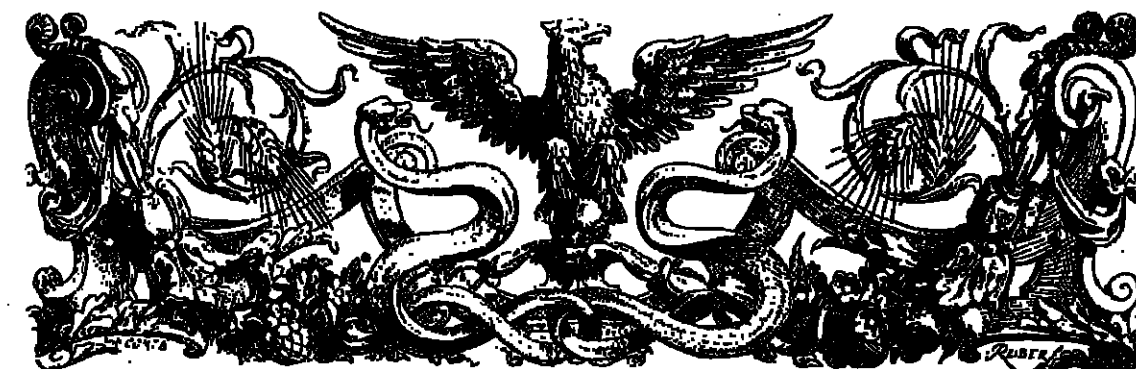
This is a time of rediscovery in social theory. Now that we are released from the grip of the idea that the object of social science should be to copy the methods and outlook of the natural sciences, previously ignored traditions of thought have acquired a new prominence. How many of those concerned with social theory, in the English-speaking world at any rate, had even heard of "hermeneutics" a few years ago? How many would have accepted that aesthetics, or the philosophy of language and action, had any particular relevance to the concerns of the social sciences? Today the hermeneutic tradition has become a focus of debate, and those interested in social theory dabble in all sorts of ideas that previously they would have left well alone. If lesser-known traditions of thought have gained new life, however, so too has scholarship into the work of those whose writings have been regarded as of continuing relevance to contemporary problems of social analysis. New books on Marx appear almost every week. Many may amount to nothing more than yet another journey across numbingly familiar terrain, but the standards of scholarly endeavour, among those both for and against Marx, is far higher than it was; and "Marxism" now is a highly variegated body of thought, certainly in some respects at the cutting-edge of current advances in social theory.

Durkheim and Max Weber are the others in prime position in the classical pantheon of social theorists. In their case also there has been an impressive amount of fruitful scholarly work in recent years, not all of it merely descriptive or diatetic. The publication of a Centre d'Etudes Durkheimiennes in Paris attests to a resurgence of interest in Durkheim in his country of origin. In Germany, as elsewhere, Weber's work has become the object of new-found attention and, as always, controversy. At least some of those on the Left seem to have ceased to regard him as a reactionary dullard, whose attempts to understand the origins and nature of modern capitalism are trivial, or uninteresting where they do not conform to the views of Marx. Moreover, in the writings of Wolfgang Schivelbusch and others, certain of Weber's ideas have been employed in a genuinely innovative way.

In such a climate of thought it is hardly surprising that there has been a renewal of interest in other authors whose work was regarded as widely remote from the philosophy of history, epistemology, and on the theory of culture, or topics in psychology, music, education and religion; and he also produced a variety of studies of particular philosophers and artists, most notably perhaps of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Goethe, and Rembrandt.

What holds this very considerable diversity of topics together? A method, certainly, but not one concerned to develop general laws dealing with the forms of social organization. Simmel's favourite terms to describe the core of his concerns were *Vergegenständlichung* and *Wechselwirkung*, neither of which is easily rendered into English. The first has an active connotation, and has sometimes been translated as "socialization". In preferring it to *Gesellschaft*, "society", Simmel emphasizes that social relations are constantly in process, coming into being and dissolving. The second term, which means something like "reciprocal exchange", is used to refer to the inter-related character of all modes of human activity and types of culture.

The apparently trivial cultural object, or fleeting social encounter, may demonstrate as much about wider social totalities as seemingly more weighty phenomena. Several new translations of Simmel have appeared in English, providing a more adequate sample of his ideas than was previously available. These



psychological or even metaphysical preconditions.

The *Philosophy of Money* is Simmel's most substantial and coherent single work. But is not at all an easy book to read, and Simmel himself was never satisfied with its structure, even after reorganizing it several times. He suggested to a friend that the best way to tackle the book might be to start with the final chapter, leaving through other parts until interesting sections caught the eye. Simmel was above all an essayist, the author of a bewildering variety of monographs and articles. He did not set out to build a systematic social theory: indeed he often concerned himself with punctuating the ambitions of system-builders. The diversity of his writings - the feature that seemed most characteristic of Simmel to his contemporaries - presents a different picture to that held by those who only know of his work via the English version of *Sociologie*: Simmel was as much philosopher and aesthete as sociologist. He wrote widely on the philosophy of history, epistemology, and on the theory of culture; or topics in psychology, music, education and religion; and he also produced a variety of studies of particular philosophers and artists, most notably perhaps of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Goethe, and Rembrandt.

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The standpoint Simmel built for himself around the notions of socialization and exchange was a consistent and sophisticated one. He rejected all conceptions, such as those of Comte or Durkheim, which elevated "society" to a position separate from human interaction. "Society" is nothing more than the flux of that interaction, in changing cultural settings. As Frisby comments, the historian and hermeneutic philosopher Dilthey excepted Simmel from his critical forays against sociology, and the views of the two had some important elements in common: Simmel did not locate the subject-matter

The flux of the real

By Anthony Giddens

Several major features of Simmel's writing have remained largely unknown to an English-speaking audience. One is his engagement with Marxism. Simmel was not as continuously preoccupied with the legacy of Marx, or with the likely fate of socialist movements of the day, as was Weber. But his *Philosophie des Geldes* (*The Philosophy of Money*), first published in 1900, is a work of enduring importance which directly confronts the question of commodification in modern society and culture. It is not a Marxist work, but one which nonetheless develops themes stimulated by ideas inherent in Marx at the same time as criticizing them. Simmel described it as an attempt to elaborate upon historical materialism, "such that the explanatory value of the incorporation of economic forms themselves is recognized to be the result of more profound valuations and currents of

According to Frisby, Simmel can be regarded as a "sociological flâneur", a stroller on the sidewalk of history. Frisby does not use this term with derogatory intent, but in order to draw a link between Simmel

of sociology, as Comte and Durkheim did, in an organic unity of society; the sociological approach, in his view, is rather a mode of analysing historical materials. Sociology "must concern itself with sociation of the most diverse levels and types".

The *Philosophy of Money* is the work in which Simmel appears to come closest to discussing a distinct "type" of society: modern capitalism. Characteristically, however, he avoids linking his discussion distinctively with capitalism. Although his conception of the prevalence of the commodity form has direct implications for a social critique, he does not spell them out. He retains, Frisby suggests, his role of detached observer, of *flâneur*; not the detachment of the objective scientist, but of the impressionist painter. An aesthetic stance thus pervades work in which on the face of it is about that

In the concluding section of his book, Frisby relates Simmel's work to his context - Germany, particularly Berlin, at the turn of the century - and throughout his quotes from the judgments of Simmel's contemporaries in attempting to interpret his ideas. One colleague, Karl Jost, seemed to reflect the views of many when he spoke of *The Philosophy of Money* as a "philosophy of our times". Simmel rarely wrote directly on social or political issues of the day. But his works convey the intellectual atmosphere of the milieu in which he lived, at the same time generalizing this to produce an overall *Lebensphilosophie*.

Simmel's philosophy of existence, in Frisby's interpretation, involves two main elements. One is a conception of the alienation of culture; but this is linked to a distinctive "perspectivism". The alienation of culture - epitomized by money, which can represent everything but is itself nothing - Simmel sees as an apparently irreversible trend in the modern epoch. The expansion of the money economy expresses a process of estrangement between human beings and their cultural products which, Simmel says, "confronts the individual in the same way as fate confronts the instability and irregularity of our will". We can escape such estrangement not by an institutional transformation such as proposed by Marxists, but by creating private spheres of subjectivity, in the protection and enrichment of self.

What Simmel in his later writings refers to as "the tragedy of culture" is not confined to the present day, although it finds its most acute expression there. All culture, he seems to argue, insofar as it assumes a fixity, becomes alienated from the movement or process inherent in human life in "sociation". This distance from the object, paradoxically, is the source of aesthetic feeling. The distancing of the individual from cultural products, Frisby suggests, is in and of itself implies a "perspectivist" stance. For Simmel, there is no fixed point or perspective from which reality can be apprehended. This does not imply a relativism in which there are countless "realities", but represents a particular version of Kantianism. No totality can be directly grasped conceptually, but only in shifting perspective that change in relation to the flux of the real. We have come a long way, in this analysis, from "formal sociology". What have been seen by many interpreters of Simmel as fixed, immutable forms imposed on history, are perhaps more accurately understood as mutable perspectives reflecting ceaseless change.

There is a great deal of interest in Frisby's book. Much of what he has to say about the interpretation of Simmel's writings seems to me correct, and the book makes a valuable contribution to recovering Simmel as a thinker whose ideas have relevance to current debates in social theory. However, it is also a little disappointing. There are more deeply embedded inconsistencies and ambiguities in Simmel's writings than Frisby appears to acknowledge. He blits at various criticisms of Simmel's work, but these are not developed. A critical discussion of Simmel, in the light of the trends in social theory I referred to at the beginning of this review, would have given the book more substance and appeal. Nonetheless, it is an important contribution to the literature of social theory.

Simmel's fondness for the essay seemed to many of his contemporaries, and to other interpreters since, to be a tacit source of weakness. He may be dazzling in the range of subjects to which he applied his talents, but perhaps the result is superficiality without substance? Borrowing from Adorno, Frisby makes an interesting, and to my mind persuasive case to the contrary. The essay,

of sociology, which are mostly to be found in the earlier part of his career, had a considerable influence upon the development of social thought in Germany at the turn of the century. In them his view of the role of the *flâneur* is the key to understanding Baudelaire; and something similar, Frisby claims, can be said of understanding Simmel. Simmel is not just an observer of the variability of social life and culture, his purpose is to capture the evanescent in order to gain a more profound grasp of human activity than would be possible with a less oblique method. He is a stroller with a camera trying, in his own phrase, to capture "snapshots under the aspect of eternity". Simmel's aesthetics, Frisby wants to show, are not separate from his sociological interests. Rather than attempting to create a sociology of art, however, Simmel wrote social theory in an aesthetic vein.

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God's mouthpiece

By R. A. Peace

V. V. GLIPPIUS:
Gogol.
Edited and translated by Robert A. Maguire.
216pp. Ann Arbor: Ardis. \$9.60.
0 8203 612 6

Gogol is notoriously elusive both as man and writer, and Robert Maguire has already provided one of the best accounts of this diversity of Gogol criticism in his introduction to the anthology *Gogol from The Twentieth Century*. The monograph which he has now translated dates from 1924. It makes a perfunctory nod to the Marxism and the Formalism of its day, but then pursues its own independent course. Glipius provides no detailed biography of Gogol but relates the turning-points in his life to his artistic development. He shows that, from the first, Gogol was aware of his high calling and that literature was only one of the avenues he considered. He tends to minimize the absurdity of Gogol's appointment to St Petersburg University as a lecturer in history (it was not to the chair, as Glipius asserts), but draws interesting parallels between his "academic" and "belles-lettres" writings.

After the production of his play *The Government Inspector*, Gogol spent twelve years abroad, making his last visit to his native Ukraine in 1842. He died in 1852, but it is difficult

critics interpreted the novel as an indictment of serfdom, they were soon to be disillusioned by *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (1847). The critic Belinsky, Gogol's staunchest champion, wrote a blistering attack on this work in a letter which has entered literary history, and Gogol's Slavophile friends were also embarrassed by its extreme conservatism and religiosity. Its art seemed to regard himself as the chosen mouthpieces of God, and his plans for the continuation of *Dead Souls* were conditioned by his sense of a prophetic role. The completed manuscript of Part II of the work was twice burned. The second occasion coincided with the rapid fast by which Gogol chose to end his life.

Glipius's suggestion that Gogol's "aesthetic individualism" turned into "moral individualism" may be open to dispute, but (whether consciously or not) the scheme parallels the philosophical development of Belinsky during the 1830s and with him that of a whole generation, moving from Schelling, through Rights to Hegel, Belinsky's initial Hegelianism implied total acceptance of the *status quo* - a position not unlike that of Gogol in *Selected Passages* - and the critic's wrath may in part have been occasioned by a sense of rejecting a former aberration of his own. The parallel is not developed by Glipius, and Maguire's assertion that Belinsky's Hegelian period coincided with his early fiction literature in the mid 1830s is incorrect.

Maguire is correct, however, in maintaining that Glipius's study is

one of the classics of Russian Gogol criticism. It was for this reason that Brown University issued a reprint of the original in 1963, and in his introduction to that edition Donald Fanger commended Glipius both as critic and scholar. The distinction is worth making: for the book's strength derives principally from its author's scholarship. As one of the editors of the Academy of Sciences' four-volume edition of Gogol's works, Glipius had a detailed knowledge of archival material and early drafts. He combined this with an impressive knowledge of Gogol's literary contemporaries and precursors, both Russian and Western European, and assessed the influence of the Ukrainian puppet theatre and the Ukrainian plays of Gogol's own father.

This double scholarly approach has much to recommend it, but there are dangers. Archive sources may divert the critical gaze from the writing-desk to the waste-paper basket. Glipius's use of such material is always intelligent, and he criticizes V. V. Rozanov for the "major error" of regarding the *Act of The Overcoat* as an simplification of the civil servant, portrayed in an earlier draft. Nevertheless, given the size of the study, a surprising amount of attention is paid to fragments, minor works and drafts. His evaluation of literary parallels also presents problems. If such evaluation is to be useful, detailed analysis is called for. The volume of material adduced by Glipius largely precludes it. In

deed, detailed analysis of the works

of others, even mere enumeration of titles, may serve to distance the author rather than put him in focus. Glipius himself admits: "the task of picking out western parallels to *The Portrait* is very rewarding, but of little value."

Glipius's scholarship may have determined his critical approach, which is to suggest that Gogol's art derives from literature and not from life. Yet the critic in Glipius was not happy with such an extreme position. Time and again he returns to a theme which he never develops: Gogol's writing as an expression of his psychological drives. Thus, commenting on Gogol's rejection of the theatrical convention of anonymous intrigue, Glipius concedes: "It is essential to recognize that there is a hidden psychological reason why Gogol departed so decisively from the tradition in just this respect, a reason which biography, psychology and psychopathology have so far been incapable of revealing in all its aspects". Since Glipius wrote this, much critical attention has been paid to the psychological implications of Gogol's writing, and in particular to this very aspect, characterized by Hugh McLain as Gogol's "flight from love".

Bias towards the literary springs of Gogol's art leads Glipius to an original interpretation of the writer's intentions for the second part of *Dead Souls*. He is prepared to believe Gogol's "explanation" that the second burning of the manuscript was a mistake, but less inclined to

away hulk crippled. But only one galleon sank and two made for the Netherlands half-sinking. The very winds which made a concerted attack difficult for the English scattered the smaller and more lightly armed Spanish vessels far and wide, out of range of the English ships which would otherwise have destroyed them wholesale.

The change of wind to the south-west broke off the action before the English had won a devastating victory, and enabled Medina Sidonia to pull away with his shattered galleons to the north-west, gathering the scattered transports and supply ships as he went. The English fleet could have renewed the battle if it had had the means, but powder and shot had run out. The Spanish fleet conserved what little it could but did not need it, since the pursuit was a nominal one only. Howarth's assumption that Medina Sidonia had no pilots for this region is mistaken since the Hanseatic *urcar*, among the reassembled merchantmen, had frequently sailed that way and could guide him. The galleons mostly survived the Atlantic storms but very many of the other ships did not.

Howarth does his best with such narratives as Spaniards left of their experiences, but the laconic *Diario* of Medina Sidonia is backed only by a very uneven array of further narratives and later recollections of the fighting from the Spanish side. It is not surprising that he gives good measure to the adventures of Francisco de Cuellar, after his shipwreck on the Silgo coast. This account was first published in English in 1893 (by the Royal Irish Academy) and not, as Howarth thinks, in 1897. He links this up with the underwater explorations of the Girona by Robert Sténuit, by Sidney Wignall and Colin Wilson and the Santa Maria de la Rosa at the Blaskets, and of Colin Wilson and the Perry Sub-aqua Club of La Trinidad Valencera off Inchowen, to make a vivid story of the wreckage of between twenty and twenty-six of the mainly lighter vessels on the Irish coast. He does not, however, link these discoveries,

especially as set out in Wilson's *Full Faithful Five* and his more technical study in the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* in 1979, sufficiently with the structure and armament of the Armada ships which had so much to do with their failure. He stresses, too, without adequate explanation, the English killing of several thousand shipwrecked men.

In fact the importance of the Armada and its defeat may have been greater for Ireland than for almost anywhere else. The English officials there expected its mere arrival in the Channel to set off a general insurrection of the Irish and Old English alike. News of its defeat led them to draw back from the brink. But the uncompromising killing of almost everyone captured (as had been done in comparable circumstances to ensure that resistance would not revive. In 1589 an official reported that all preparations for a rising had ceased. The example secured a few years of peace, though the Nine Years' War began in 1594 and gradually spread through Ireland. Spain, having experienced English ruthlessness in 1588-89, sent no appreciable aid until 1601, when Philip II was dead and it was anyhow too late to help the insurgents.

We should perhaps go a little further into the Armada in its broader perspective. Geoffrey Parker, in a cautionary tale in *History* (1976), made it clear that if Parma had indeed landed, his army, with reinforcements from the Armada, would have made short work of the English. The effectiveness of the English fleets in preventing the possibility of an invasion was vital. Thus far the traditional version of the role of Howard, Drake and the rest is confirmed. But did Spain suffer much from losing 10,000 men and something like half her fleet? It now seems that the best ships got back, mostly in very bad shape, and that a number of them were capable of being repaired. Philip learned little from the defeat, since he sent two further abortive

fleets against England, yet he did at least strengthen the naval protection of his empire and the fortifications in the Caribbean to prevent the long privateering war from destroying the core of his empire (more silver not less got through in the 1590s), even if the Caribbean was weakened beyond full repair by plunder, and finally by trade and commerce. John Elliott, however, saw the year 1588 as a turning point: in *Imperial Spain* (1963), he wrote "If any one year marks the division between the triumphant Spain of the first two Habsburgs, and the defeated, disillusioned Spain of their successors, that year was 1588." Elizabethan England acquired a great deal of prestige from what had happened, but did not ever again commit the whole of the Queen's fleet in any of the subsequent enterprises in the war, and so perhaps ensured that none were complete successes and a few were failures. Perhaps the victory made Elizabeth feel too big for her boots, since her later interventions in the Netherlands and France, at the same time as she was involved in the total conquest of Ireland, were more than she could really afford, creating major problems for her successors.

This is rather a long way from Howarth's book, whose scope is more modest. He does, in one way or another, bring out the unrealistic nature of the Spanish enterprise, its defective strategy and tactics, and also the tenacity and endurance shown by the galleon commanders and their seamen. In circumstances where defeat might have been total, Spain saved enough to claim an honourable setback - the elements could be blamed, rather than the English, for what had happened to the ships in the Atlantic. If he had absorbed more completely the full range of recent scholarship on the Armada David Howarth could have done more to make clear the fortunes and fate of "La Armada Invencible", but his book as it stands is forceful, skilled and readable and makes a lively if limited contribution to the unfolding story.

Prudently paradoxical

By Michael Hofmann

ALAN MENHENNET:
The Romantic Movement
276pp. Croom Helm. £15.95.
0 7099 0381 2

The Romantic Movement forms Part 6 in a *Literary History of Germany*, and by its standards, the series should prove a useful one. Alan Menhennet's study is at once detailed and wide-ranging, fair-minded and not impersonal. It covers those writers in the period 1790-1830 whom he regards as quintessentially Romantic: von Arnim, Brentano, Eichendorff, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Kleist, Novalis and Tieck. In accepting both chronological and stylistic limits, and excluding on the one hand the non-Romantic contemporaries of these writers such as Goethe (like Shakespeare, traditionally a special case) and Hölderlin, and on the other those slightly later, but still Romantically-orientated writers like Mörike and Lenau, Professor Menhennet adopts the conflicting guidelines of the movement-study and the historical survey. The result is that his book is focussed on the fiercest, most doctrinaire manifestations of Romanticism in a way that is not always congenial to its author. There are occasional barbed remarks and *cris de coeur* that betray this feeling, like this audible sigh of exhausted patience at some of the drama produced by the Romantics: "The texture is too thin, and one begins to long for more substantial fare. Man cannot live on *hors d'oeuvres* alone."

The limits imposed on Menhennet's study, confining him to a handful of major authors and perhaps a score of others, involve him in several similarly unfavourable judgments, but it would be wrong to conclude from this that the writer is out of sympathy with his subject-matter. The Romantics created their own world, and Menhennet's exposition, though pointed, is hardly malicious. "War, which he (Novalis) encounters through the Crusaders, has the tendency to become 'Dichtung' and the participants, 'unwillkürlich von Poesie durchdrungen Weltkräfte'." Such a sentence only illustrates the sanity of Menhennet's approach, his way of placing evaluative checks upon his material. It is tempting to let oneself be carried along with the swelling phrases of Novalis, his "world-forces" involuntarily steeped in poetry, but the critic-intervener points out the nationalism and militarism that are latent in such a vague and crepuscular view of history.

This, in fact, is where the strength of the book lies: in its successful

identification of Romantic attitudes and beliefs. The general introductory chapter, "The Romantic Mentality", is particularly good, generating a real feeling of excitement in the reader as Menhennet discusses the religious and political affiliations of the Romantics, the interior dimension of much of their writing (its appeal to the *Gemütl*), their longing for another, harmonious world, their preference for mixed forms and the tendency of their work towards fragmentation. Most refreshing, perhaps, in Menhennet's portrayal of the Romantics is his salutary emphasis on the use they had for rational thought. The Romantics were sophisticated intellectuals, whose aim was not to destroy thought, but to extend its empire into realms previously thought to be beyond its scope. One of the most mystically inclined Romantics, Franz von Baader, rejects the view attributed to Rousseau that 'man, when he begins to think, ceases to feel' as "Poltronnerie gegen die Spekulation." Though in many of their pronouncements they were given to giddy paradoxes, and they held a deep loathing for the Philistinism that followed the Enlightenment, yet one of their cardinal virtues was *Besonnenheit* (meaning calm or prudence). While, by its very nature, Romanticism can never succeed as a half-hearted undertaking, most of the Romantics were all too aware of the dangers of excess. Menhennet argues, for E. T. A. Hoffmann's work, for instance, finds its subjects in the border area between imagination and madness, between Romantic *Schmacht* and plain delusion.

After this excellent introductory chapter, most of the rest of *The Romantic Movement* is taken up with short discussions of single authors and their works, as in most critical studies of this kind. Many of these analyses are interesting and to the point, but it is possible to regret a certain diffuseness, especially in contrast to the book's beginning. A stragglers' march-past, rather than a gleaming *ku-klux-klan*, Menhennet continues to make "a good many cross-references from one of the Romantics to another, but much of the information, not being organized around themes, appears merely incidental. At the same time, drawing as he does upon a limited range of authors, some of the works he discusses are - often to his own evident dissatisfaction - little more than curiosities in literary history. All the more reason to welcome an "Excursus" on Jean Paul, which begins engagingly: "The positioning of this section has caused no little heart-searching," and proceeds to discuss the heterodox Romantic, who, so Professor Menhennet informs us, had the baroque habit of keeping a card-index system of metaphors, using about two hundred abstract concepts for classification.

Gnome-dropping

By Peter Kemp

NEL D. TRACAS and ROSE A. ZIM-BARDI (Editors):
Tolkien: New Critical Perspectives
175pp. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. \$10.50.
0 8181 1408 X

If you see Tolkien's work as not much more than a portentous blend of *Beowulf* and Big Bear, then let's do the book for you. Aimed at zealots of "the cultic phenomenon" (as one contributor refers to it), it's an anthology, largely made up of near-hagiographical essays. There are a few interesting details - such as the news that "Frodo's name was originally Bongo, but Tolkien, as he grew more and more disatisfied with that name". But, for the most part, the claims predominate. We hear of "the great trilogy" as assured that "Tolkien and Swift are different (largely in mood)" and that

The Silmarillion "demands comparison with *Paradise Lost* and *The Illiad*."

Among recherché topics touched upon is a discussion of whether Aragorn's steed was a pterodactyl, and an evocation of his name ("highly evocative for a philologist who has studied European names of the last millennium"). Involving much etymological recourse to Old English and Old Irish, Greek and Gothic, Old Swedish, Old Norse, and Old High German, A note of some solemnity prevails. "The hobbit is a tender parody of Virgilian man." The slow reproductive rate of the dwarves foreshadows their gradual extinction. "... though, occasionally, something cover peeps out as when one writer declares of hobbits, 'they are still here, and though they hide from us by their silent way, some of us have sometimes seen them'". Piously, picking over the gnomes and the gnomes, the book finally springs a surprise. Oddly, but honourably, it includes as its last piece a briskly devastating catalogue of Tolkien's weaknesses by Robert M. Adams.

FICTION

Learning the tricks of the trade

By Janet Morgan

DAVID NIVEN:
Go Slowly, Come Back Quickly
382pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.
0 241 10690 7

BARRY NORMAN:
Have a Nice Day
182pp. Quartet Books. £6.50.
0 7043 2292 7

In an Author's Note, written from Goa (*Goa?*), David Niven thanks "a friend of mine, a world-famous author" who was asked whether he had "any hot tips for writing a novel". Mr Niven gives the following version of his friend's reply: "Well, he said, you could perhaps try... giving it a beginning, a middle and an end. Those three stops are, surely, significant. What are the trade secrets which he meanly withholds from us? Close inspection of his novel may give the answer."

First, there is *Sex*: the hero... six feet two inches tall... possessor of magnificent athlete's body... blond all-American good looks... slanting green eyes... deadlocked football game finally crunches to close... Carole... gorgeous seventeen-year old cause of his arousal... her mother's little white house on Chestnut Street... mother visiting relatives in San Francisco.

Having made this gesture, Mr Niven eschews further *Sex*, apart from the occasional reference to... great expertise... imaginative love-making... variety of her demands... instinctive compliance with any unspoken whim... screams of delight... and later, when the hero returns home unexpectedly one night... "over the top of the sofa something white moving rhythmically up and down... pink satin shoe on a leg he knew too well..."

Carole bows out on page fourteen, with a brief reappearance a couple of hundred pages later when, still gorgeous, she has a husband and small child. Her place is taken by Pandora, the daughter of an Earl. At weekends Pandora disappears to Hawkmoor: marble floor... endless passage of squeaking oaken boards... used to be the nurseries... There is a somewhat improbable fixer ("His Lordship will be glad to fix you, Sir"), a helpful footman ("... to open door in panelling... squeeze toothpaste onto toothbrush... lay it across tumbler...) and Pandora's dotty but endearing father, whose late wife would have

nursed him in the pony trap and drive him over the park beneath the full moon, "touching him up with the whip". Hawkmoor and the Earl take up no more than twenty pages, but that is enough to provide a second essential ingredient, *Snobbery*. (It may also suggest a *Sense of History*, since thirty-odd years ago a court was told how a Labour Cabinet Minister's brother had induced his wife to drive him over the estate, harnessed to a "Bodices chariot".) Violence comes in larger doses - after all, the story opens in 1938. The hero's mother (blonde hair peeked out from headscarf... still remarkable figure neatly silhouetted within belted white raincoat...) and her second husband, Captain Rainbird ("... ruddy complexioned man... direct blue eyes... twill breeches, cloth gaiters, brown boots, long-waisted jacket, deerstalker, shepherd's crook... damn glad to meet you, young feller...) perish while escaping from fallen France ("... Peugeot two-seater... traffic jam machine-gunned... exhausted... bleeding... the *Landcrafter*... woman begging for life-jacket for little girl... mother's remark 'I'm a good Californian beach girl' finds her over... nasty drop fuel oil... machine sputtering... hit in heart or head... Captain Rainbird reports to bridge to help bomb down tunnel). The hero's father ("... quiet aristocratic ex-cavalryman... Skoll-

mowski's family estate at Melnic... last time Stanislas saw father... plane circles Acropolis... blue islands, evening breeze heavy with thyme... plane circles Acropolis... "your mother has asked me for a divorce"... is wiped out in the Katyn massacre. This reference does double service, supplying, as well as *Violence*, *Verisimilitude*. Ditto Stani's own war effort: "... Admiralty erects catapults on forecastles of merchant ships to project fighter aircraft into mid-Atlantic sky... Stani strapped into his Hurricane... if rockets fail, horrible death in churning propellers... if not, mortal and lonely combat with giant Condor... two false starts... rockets don't fail... dives after Condor... hide and seek... empties everything he has... muffled explosion... burning rubber... struggles to get free... parachute nearly castrates him... inflates dinghy... freezing cold... ships pass quite close... catches rain water in sail... ice forms in dinghy... cool white sheets... hole in foot tidied up... right side of face remade... a few honourable scars... DFC... convalescence in "large, Tudor-style country house" of "whisky magnate of high financial and political power"... inspection by magnate's house-party... reunion with Pandora... There is also a single footnote, on page forty-four, explaining, Wren (WAAF's look after themselves).

Then there is *Technical Expertise*. Stani, at a local cinema as Pandora starts to make her name in Hollywood, takes up photography and rapidly becomes so adept that Russian Bancroft, head of the film studio employing Pandora, arranges a month's apprenticeship with Richard Avedon (thereby getting Stani out of the way of Pandora's film premiere, after which Bancroft hopes to seduce her). What with one thing and another (the pink satin shoe incident... Bancroft soaked in the jaw... forced to strip... tied to tree in back garden... famous gossip column... rescued by milkman... surely implausible, wouldn't milk be bought in supermarket?), Stani and Avedon fail to meet, but our hero is commissioned to photograph the Doukhobors (Fighters Against the Spirit... persecuted by various Czars... banished to Caucasus 1890... shipped to Saskatchewan... now settle Kootenay Hills, British Columbia). Though their name is not always correctly spelt, they represent *Philosophy* and *Ecology* (worldly

goods mean nothing to us... never carry weapons of any sort... clusters of stone and wooden dwellings... sturdy square shapes wielding scythes... There is more *Ecology*, incidentally, at the end of the novel, when Pandora and Stani, reunited, flee to a desert island (pink hibiscus... pink beach... crystal clear sea), which also offers more *Suspense* (hurricane... fences broken at Alligator Farm... Voodoo... drinking blood... hoists Pandora over shoulders... stomach contracts with fear... reaches devastated hospital in jungle).

Symbolism is dealt with by the introduction of a swan, stranded chez Rainbird, and enabled to leave after Stani enlarges the village pond. Adrift after his battle in the air, the delicious Stani believes the swan has landed on his dinghy. During their ordeal in the eye of the hurricane, Pandora asks "again and again, like a child, what will happen to all the poor birds?", and this is also her first question on emerging from her coma in the last paragraph (thus showing that her mind is undamaged, even though by this time the reader's is in pretty poor shape). One way and another there are a good many birds in this tale: when Stani must decide whether or not to stay with Pandora and Hollywood, it is "not as easy as a cornorant heading East for fish or an egret going West in search of frogs", at Hawkmoor (note the name), he misses the pheasants but surprises a German airman, who is allowed to escape; there is Captain Rainbird himself and the Earl's nickname is Cuckoo. Not much *Sideline* here.

Most ostentatious of all is Mr Niven's use of *Hollywood* to enthral his readers. Names are unashamedly dropped - here we are at Pandora's premiere: "the flash bulbs of the massed media, still warm from popping into the faces of Rita Hayworth, Gary Cooper, James Cagney, Greer Garson, Robert Taylor, Claudette Colbert, Paul Muni and a hundred others, became a veritable firework display when Bancroft stepped forward and embraced his new star". And at the party afterwards: "Jennifer Jones, marvelously like her glowing screen image... introduced Pandora to Cary Grant, to Tyrone Power and Annabella, to Clark Gable and Sylvia Fairbanks, to Hitchcock, Charles Boyer, Jimmy Stewart and his wife Gloria, to Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, to

Ronald Colman, Marlene Dietrich, to writers like Dorothy Parker, Ben Hecht and Harry J. Kurnitz, to Cole Porter and many others" (David Niven? Ronald Reagan?). Hollywood is not, however, all glamour. Pandora's film, *The Ruby King*, is filmed in extremely uncomfortable conditions in Mexico (scrabbling cockroaches... dusty concrete stairs... sagging bed... 1900 vintage wooden steamer... alligator-haunted jungle channels... shark-infested waters of the Golfo de Campeche) and the producer and director fight constantly. The director, Gruskin, is a particularly unpleasant character, who goads his cast and crew by jabbing them with a "gossamer" (more birds), a ten-foot bamboo pole topped by a plaster cast of Gruskin's own head, fast clenched and second finger rudely extended. Gruskin prods people's bottoms with his horrid device, little suspecting that Stern, the producer, has inserted a tiny microphone into the end of it, in order to tape-record Gruskin's foul and self-incriminating remarks ("... time is money and we're on Stern time now, boys!... keep the sonofabitch happy, then we'll do it the way I'll be in the picture..."). Stern sues Gruskin, Gruskin sues Stern and Metropolis Studios sues them both. But by this time the reader is so confused that he doesn't notice.

There is no need to say anything about plot, style, characterization; the passages cited above will allow you to draw your own conclusions. Mr Niven has tried hard, too hard, but his book is not a success. There remains, of course, the important question: *who is Mr Niven's friend?* The world-famous author, one suspects, is Barry Norman. He is clearly more experienced, since his Hollywood novel is shorter, plusher and, since it is a *roman à clef*, more sophisticated. It has a jolly black pimp, whose team includes a lovable whore, who marries a sweet and somewhat frustrated ageing film star, Rex Angell. These two "feature a year of the Day of" feature a year of the Day of the Earth's voice booming and cackling away. But, for the unprejudiced, this exhaustive compilation could provide hours of tinkling jollity.

The beaming good nature of Gracie Fields, Arthur Askey, Jack Warner and Cyril Fletcher may well be a little much for some people to take, and it is hard to read their monologues (in *The Book of Comic and Dramatic Monologues*; compiled and introduced by Michael Marshall. 266pp. EMI Tree Books/EMI Music Publishing. £9.95 paperback, £6.50 hardback, £10.95 cloth, £10.95 0 241 10738 5) without hearing their crusty, salt-of-the-earth voices booming and cackling away. But, for the unprejudiced, this exhaustive compilation could provide hours of tinkling jollity.

Tea and Tranquillizers: The Diary of a Happy Housewife (by Diane Harwood, 164pp. Virago. £5.95, paperback £2.95, 0 85068 123 8) was commissioned on the strength of a *Sunday Times* "Life in the Day of" feature. A year of the Day of the Earth's voice booming and cackling away. But, for the unprejudiced, this exhaustive compilation could provide hours of tinkling jollity.

Crag Brown

Piling on the agony

By Ruth Brandon

IRMA KURTZ:
Sob, Sister
208pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.

IRMA KURTZ:
Crises, a guide to your emotions
146pp. Ebury Press. £4.95.

Irma Kurtz gives advice to the life-and-loveless, and to those generally out of control, every month in *Cosmopolitan*. (This and no other is the reason why *Crises* is subtitled "A Cosmopolitan Book".) She clearly reveals in her work, now publishing simultaneously, a distillation of this advice (*Crises*) and a novel about being an agony aunt (*Sob, Sister*). If the flyleaf didn't tell you, the author was a New Yorker you might guess it from reading such titles, in *Crises*, as "Enjoying Happiness", "Escaping from Depression" and "Anger is a Healthy Emotion". In fact she left New York some twenty years ago, and spent some years knocking around Paris before deciding to settle in London, where she became a successful journalist and a blissfully unwed mother. Such varied experience certainly seems an excellent qualification for her present job. There is no substitute for first-hand acquaintance with people's problems, as I found to my cost during my own spell as agony aunt while working for the BBC African Service. People would write about the jealousy rag-

describing her own life and its piling between their third and fourth wives, or about the shortage of goats for a dowry, and what could I say? No doubt Irma Kurtz would have done it much better.

Della, heroine of *Sob, Sister*, is, like Irma, agony aunt for a woman's magazine. She too is an expatriate Jewish New Yorker, now somewhere in her forties, who has settled in London, become a successful journalist, and lives in unmarried contentment with her son, Jake. Like Irma, Della believes that marriage as an institution is a non-starter.

The novel's structure is simple. Strong, supportive Della has acquired a number of dependants and hangers-on, together with an unbreakable habit of giving good advice forcefully by the end of the book. She has lost them all, except for her son, and is no longer interested in giving advice to anybody. Clearly, these two books illuminate each other in certain ways. For instance, the reader of *Sob, Sister* may speculate upon Irma Kurtz's fantasy life, as evoked in the detail of Della's life. Irma lives in Shepherd's Bush, but Della has made it to Chelsea. Della's (and Irma's?) American provenance is never more evident than in her preoccupation with the making and eating of sweets and cakes. (I once saw an extraordinary survey in which a number of well-known people were asked to describe their ideal day as less enjoyable for being possibly mis-taken - that the author is simply

chocolate cake. I leave it to Ms Kurtz to work out what this says about those people's sex lives.) Della spends £15 a week on cut flowers for the house, a striking detail which seems to indicate exceptionally powerful central heating - or, maybe, merely reflects the price of flowers in Chelsea.

But this close identification of author and heroine leaves the reader of *Sob, Sister* in a cleft stick. It is virtually impossible to separate Della from Irma, the more so as many of Della's actions and reactions reflect, sometimes almost verbatim, the good advice dished out more directly by Irma in *Crises*. However the fragile of mind in which one approaches a novel, even the most blatant *roman à clef*, is not the same as that in which one approaches an autobiography, even the most imaginative. A novel, in the end, must succeed in creating an imaginary world, or what is the point of writing it and not a series of articles?

The trouble is that, having read the articles in *Crises*, it is hard to see *Sob, Sister* otherwise than simply as a series of *theses en scène* to illustrate them. To marry or not marry? How can a single mother cope with working and bringing up a child? Can one avoid "personality" or "jealousy"? Is orgasm essential? Why does happiness slide into self-satisfaction? There is, a certain fairness about *Sob, Sister*, which stems from the intensity of being so close to the agony aunts. All the Americans filled with some variety of sickly

accoutrements, rather than imagining Della's, and that Della is simply Irma slightly blurred round the edges. The fact that the novel is written almost entirely from Della's point of view does nothing to dispel this notion. There are, indeed, one or two changes of viewpoint when the author suddenly becomes omniscient and reports scenes at which Della is not present, but the effect of these is rather worrying, as when imagined conversations are interposed in a biography. How can Irma/Della possibly know what went on there?

But in fact these purely imagined scenes, not featuring Della, are among the best things in the book. *Sob, Sister* improves considerably as it goes along. At the beginning the background - Della's house, her furniture, food and drinks, household organization - emerges much more clearly than the characters. But by the end the characters have started to take over; they are more than mere puppets. With catch-phrases, this transformation takes place when the novel's centre ceases to be the immaculate organization of Della, either because others take the stage or because her own life begins to fall to bits and so (one hopes and assumes) ceases to resemble that of Irma in every detail. The effort of imagination thus entailed seems to release the author from her factual trap. Next time she should be more adventurous. The whole point about writing a novel is that, even if you are an agony aunt, you can escape from living an agony aunt's life.